

# WashingtonPrincipal

Association of Washington School Principals

FALL 2016



## THE COMPLEXITY OF EQUITY

Confronting Perceptions Through Dialog, Discovery, Reflection

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# THE COMPLEXITY OF EQUITY

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Public Instruction**  
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**18 Principals of the Year**

*Addressing equity issues requires an intentional examination of long-standing, complex assumptions. It is neither a quick nor easy process. But at Larchmont Elementary in Tacoma, administrators are committed to tackling these beliefs to better serve a diverse population.*



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**Cover photo:** Students at Larchmont Elementary in Tacoma take time out to play with Assistant Principal André Benito Mountain.  
Photo: David Morrill



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## WashingtonPrincipal

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### National Affiliates

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

## One Call Away

**David Morrill**

*Communications Director*

**Remember when** the WASL, Common Core, and TPEP were topics of controversy among educators?

Today, more than any other time in recent memory, social issues are spilling over into schools. What are principals dealing with now?

How about becoming experts on trauma, restorative justice, student protests and finding a balanced and equitable approach to discipline? Rarely have the issues been as complex, sensitive, and important as what we're seeing now in terms of the national anthem, law enforcement, social justice, gender issues or the Black Lives Matter movement. All have the potential to impact the harmony and culture of a school.

Even more challenging: all of these are happening during a presidential election that is emotionally charged and predominantly focused on social issues. Principals can't control what's happening in the world around them, but they're responsible for righting the ship and maintaining a positive school culture when times are good — and even more when times are bad. With so much going on in the outside world, it can be a challenge to keep things steady. This issue of "Washington Principal" offers perspective on many of these issues playing out in schools.

Among other great stories, we have articles on what Michael Fullan would think about Colin Kaepernick's approach to protesting targeted police brutality and how the Seahawks are playing a role similar to a principal by building a bridge and trying to address issues through unity. Our guest authors are also examining disproportionality in student leadership, how one school dealt with headscarves (and hotheads), and the complexity of equity in public schools.

We also have a passionate column from AWSP President Steve Rabb tackling the social and political climate and the need for critical thinking and information processing. And, a much-deserved salute to our principals of the year.

We hope our authors help you find ways to approach these subjects in your school. The good news is, there are resources available so you don't have to shoulder these big issues alone. And if times get tough, just remember: we're only a phone call away. ■



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

## Summer Conference Housing Update

Great news! We are making some changes to the registration and housing process in 2017 that we feel will greatly benefit you and your staff.

Rather than making your housing reservations in November — months before you register for the conference — you will register for the conference before securing your housing. After submitting your conference registration, you will receive an access code to reserve your housing. Online registrants will receive this information immediately, while those submitting hard-copy registrations will receive the access code as soon as the registration is processed.

This change in our process will benefit both you and AWSP by:

- Reducing or eliminating the need for a housing waitlist. This change eliminates the need to overbook rooms out of fear that rooms won't be available when registration opens.
- Resulting in fewer changes to our hotel room block because rooms will be booked as needed, eliminating the need for holding "TBD" rooms.
- Providing greater assurance that guests making reservation requests are truly part of our organization and are staying within the hotels identified as part of our room block.

- Reducing the number of last-minute cancellations. Hotel concessions, such as room rates, are based on the number of rooms utilized and late cancellations can place our organizations at risk of financial penalties.

The staff at WASA, AWSP, and the Spokane Housing Authority will monitor housing closely and are committed to improving this process for our attendees.

Housing and registration open Jan. 17, 2017; the conference runs from June 25-27 at the Spokane Convention Center.

## TPEP WAC Changes

Changes to the focused evaluation went into effect on Aug. 31. Under the new guidelines, teachers and principals who move to a focused evaluation use their most recent comprehensive score as the official summative evaluation score during the course of their focused evaluation cycle.

This encourages teachers and principals to address areas of challenge during the focused evaluation process, without the risk of negative consequences for addressing those areas, instead of picking something safe. The new WAC also sets a Dec. 15 deadline to move a teacher or principal from focused to comprehensive. It also expands the definition of what an "observation" may include. For more details, check out OSPI Bulletin B039-16 or the AWSP website.

## Discipline Law Changes

The 2016 Legislature passed 4SHB 1541, a comprehensive bill that makes some pretty significant changes to the new student discipline laws. OSPI has a bulletin that will get you up to speed on the matter (B024-16). As we rethink discipline in our state through the lens of equity and social justice, there will be some growing pains for districts, principals, and teachers along the way. Stay tuned for AWSP News throughout the year to see some of the best practices that districts are using throughout the state.

## National Principals Month

October is National Principals Month, and here in Washington, Gov. Jay Inslee has declared October to be School Principals Month. The National Association of Secondary School Principals and the National Association of Elementary School Principals have a great website providing different toolkits and resources for all audiences who might wish to recognize the hard work of their principals. Visit [www.principalsmonth.org](http://www.principalsmonth.org) for more details.

## POY Nominations

We're looking for our next principals of the year! The nomination process is open to everyone; that means students, teachers, district office, parents, and even community members can nominate an outstanding principal in their life. However, sometimes no one knows what a great principal looks like better than another principal. With that in mind, do you have an exceptional colleague? How about another principal who's mentored you to become the leader you are today? Being a principal of the year comes with plenty of fun perks: recognition at a Mariners game, a trip to DC, an evening at the governor's mansion. It also provides a powerful platform for your voice. This past year, our POYs have met with the governor, been featured on TVW's "Inside Olympia" program, and served on distinguished educator panels.





# Coming & Going

## OSPI

### Who's out:

Randy Dorn will end his eight-year run as state superintendent in January. We would like to thank Randy Dorn for his eight years of service. His commitment to fighting for full funding of K-12 education cannot be questioned.

**Who's in:** Likely Erin Jones or Chris Rykdal. For more on the candidates, turn to page 10.



Randy Dorn

Council. Never one to stay quiet, Gene is now executive director of Statewide Initiatives for the Association of Educational Service Districts.

**Who's in:** Dr. Rachelle Sharpe, formerly the director of student financial aid at WSAC, is serving as the interim executive director. Karras Consulting is helping with the search for the next executive director.



Dr. Gene Sharratt



Dr. Rachelle Sharpe



Erin Jones



Chris Rykdal

## WSSDA

**Who's out:** Alan Burke, spent many years as the deputy superintendent at OSPI before taking over executive director duties at the Washington



Alan Burke

State School Directors' Association. Alan has been a tremendous asset for the state in K-12 education, and even though he's retiring from full-time work at WSSDA, he'll keep busy advising Gov. Inslee on McCleary issues.

**Who's in:** Tim Garchow, former superintendent at Rainier School District, is now at the helm for WSSDA. Also new to the association is Jessica Vavrus, who joined WSSDA last spring as their government relations director. Jessica is well-known across the state for her time as OSPI's Assistant Superintendent for Teaching & Learning.



Tim Garchow



Jessica Vavrus

## WSAC

**Who's out:** Dr. Gene Sharratt. Perhaps the state's most beloved educator, Dr. Sharratt has retired from his governor-appointed role as executive director of the Washington Student Achievement

## Did you know...?

AWSP Membership Ambassadors are retired principals who personally visit and welcome every principal and assistant principal new to building administration across our state. That's over 300 personal visits made annually by 18 individuals.

Membership Ambassadors hand-deliver AWSP Active membership materials to familiarize new members with their benefits, resources and support provided by AWSP and national association affiliates (NAESP or NASSP).



# ASK

## A PRINCIPAL

What do you do to start the year on the right foot and instill a positive school culture?

“ I start the first staff meeting of the year with the question, “Why do you teach?” I will give the teachers time to reflect independently for a couple of minutes. After reflection, I show my five-minute mini graduation video from last year (<https://youtu.be/O9pcdqcfij8>).

The staff meeting continues with friendly reminders how to help kids to navigate high school.

Our goal as a school is to get the students to reach their high school graduation though a thoughtful and meaningful learning experience.

There are several more components in the staff meeting, but this is how we will be setting the tone for the upcoming year.

**Jayme Evans, Principal**

*Washington Virtual Academies*

“ One thing we do to not only start the year off right, but maintain a positive culture and keep school pride high, is to play the fight song over the intercom as students are leaving the building every Friday.

**Aaron Fletcher, Principal**

*Liberty High School  
Liberty School District*



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



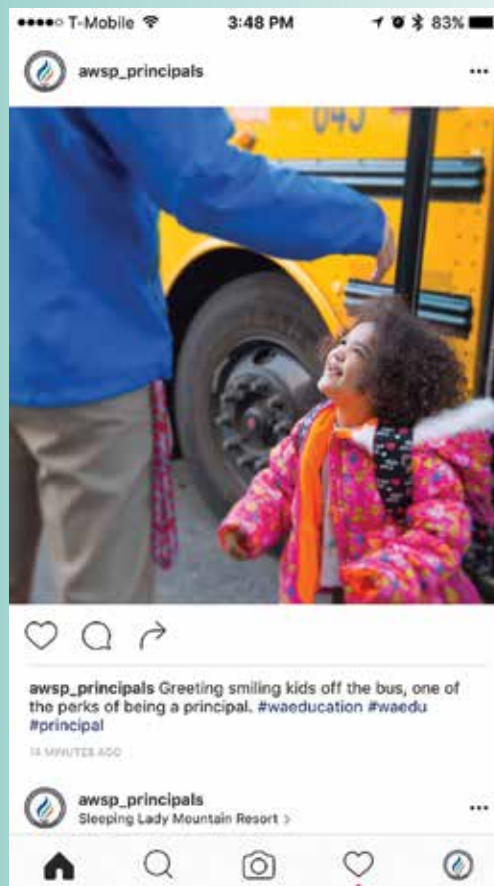
**Instagram** Who's telling your story? (Hopefully you are!) Instagram, aka the app that popularized the food photo, is a great social platform for you to show what's

happening in your school. Why should your school be on Instagram? Over 60 percent of Instagram users are active daily (second only to Facebook among social networks). It's highly likely that your parents, especially if you're in an elementary building, are active and engaged on Instagram.

Aside from meeting your audience where they are, Instagram lets you communicate all the great things happening in your school through photos. The app caught on quickly with stylistic photo filters, easy sharing options, and hashtags for easy content discovery. Whether you're sharing positive signage throughout your school, science fair projects, sporting events, scenes from the school play, or highlighting staff members, Instagram is a great way to do it (it's even fun).

**Price:** Free on iOS and Android.

**Follow us on Instagram:** @awsp\_principals





# The Right Profession at the Right Time

**Steve Rabb**

*Enumclaw Middle School  
Enumclaw SD*

## What an interesting

time we live in right now, a time where the hope for respectful debate and nuance is waning. People are either in your camp and enforce your existing views, or they're an idiot. No matter what side of the aisle you're on politically, nobody seems to like the way things are or have much hope for where they're headed. I'm thankful that in the midst of all this, we have chosen a profession that allows us to block out the noise and build some certainty into the futures of those who would otherwise have very little.

The one thing that has crystalized for me lately is our moral obligation to help kids develop the ability to think for themselves. Although this is the same obligation I understood coming in to the profession 31 years ago, the "moral imperative" aspect of it has hit a new high. The onslaught of information through social media, talk radio, and cable that spoon-feeds people's thinking is rampant and impactful.

We need dust off of the age-old mandate of developing "critical thinking" with renewed appreciation, recognizing that it might be one of the most important tools we give to our kids. As tough as it is for adults to wade through all of the information and glean anything of substance or authenticity, it is imperative that we integrate this into our kids' development as students and citizens. Abraham Lincoln is credited as saying, "The philosophy of the school room in one generation will be the philosophy of government in the

next." Abe's words resonate today and remind us we are molding the future of our country.

Kids are the future; therefore, we are in a profession that influences what that future looks like. Rational thought, integrity, kindness and civility may have temporarily "stepped out for a smoke" in our society. I don't think they have seen their last days in our country, especially if we can appreciate the opportunity and power we have to impact how students process the barrage of information coming at them.

“ You do make a difference every day, even if some days it feels like all you did was show up.

This involves helping kids question, challenge, wonder, debate and dig deeper for evidence than what sits on the surface. This can be done in any and every subject area to discern fact from fiction, the rational from the irrational; the plausible from the preposterous and the sound from the unsound. It involves reading, writing, speaking and listening in ways that shape deep and rich conversations about things that really matter from the content we teach.

A couple years ago, my August staff training started with the idea of "Getting to Why" and used a TED Talk by Simon Sinek to launch our

thinking (<https://goo.gl/QV7k6Y>). Sinek talks about communicating from the inside out. He codifies three levels of communication, rooted in biology, in a "Golden Circle": Why, How, and What. The content we teach is the "What." Developing deep, critical thinkers is our "How." Impacting our future, as well as the future of our kids, is clearly our "Why." This is the moral imperative I was referring to above; we have a hand in influencing and shaping the future, hopefully creating stronger, more harmonious, equitable, and just world for our remaining years and generations to come.

We have the best job on the face of the planet, don't we? This is my silver anniversary as an administrator and it never ceases to amaze me that I still don't dread Monday mornings. How could I be so fortunate to be where I am now? It certainly wasn't foresight on my part, but here I am and I'm thankful to represent you as your president this year.

You do make a difference every day, even if some days it feels like all you did was show up. Thank you for your service, and thank you for being a part of an organization whose mission is to serve you in your work of educating all kids. Our society needs you now more than ever. ■



*Steve Rabb is principal of Enumclaw Middle School and is serving as AWSP president for the 2016-17 school year.*

# Superintendent of Public Instruction

## Jerry Bender

Director of Government Relations  
AWSP

## It's election season again and things are heating up.

In our state, the race to lead the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is shaping up to be a tight one. A panel of AWSP staff and members from across the state interviewed the three leading candidates earlier this year. After the interviews, the panel selected Chris Reykdal as the best candidate for state superintendent.

The panel was impressed with both Reykdal and Erin Jones; however, Reykdal's experience as a legislator and as Deputy

Executive Director of the State Board of Community and Technical Colleges was one of the key factors for Reykdal's unanimous selection. The Washington School Principals Legislative Effectiveness Association (AWSP's PAC) supported Reykdal's campaign with a \$4,000 contribution. Here's an overview of the top two candidates and where they stand on some of the issues important to principals right now.

	<b>Erin Jones</b> <a href="http://erinjones2016.org">erinjones2016.org</a> 	<b>Chris Reykdal</b> <a href="http://chrisreykdal.com">chrisreykdal.com</a> 
Professional Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher</li> <li>• Instructional Coach</li> <li>• OSPI Assistant Superintendent</li> <li>• School District Director for Avid</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teacher and Soccer Coach</li> <li>• State Board of Community &amp; Technical Colleges</li> <li>• Associate Director, Deputy Executive Director, Operating Budget Director</li> <li>• State Representative, 22nd Legislative District (Olympia)</li> <li>• Fiscal Analyst, Washington State Senate</li> </ul>
Volunteer Experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Girl Scouts Board Member</li> <li>• College Spark Board Member</li> <li>• Recruiting Washington Teachers Board Member</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tumwater School Board</li> <li>• Trustee, College Spark Foundation</li> <li>• City of Tumwater Planning Commissioner</li> </ul>
Education	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bryn Mawr College</li> <li>• Pacific Luthern University</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Washington State University</li> <li>• University of North Carolina</li> </ul>
Campaign Contributions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$139,000+ (Sept. 13, 2016)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• \$166,000+ (September 13, 2016)</li> </ul>



### Basic Education Funding

McCleary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will take up to \$10 billion to fully fund K-12 education and part of that should come from closing tax loopholes</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It will take up to \$4 billion to fully fund K-12 education with part coming from a capital gains tax. Limit uses of local levies</li> </ul>
Plan to Update Building Schools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Should be funded out of basic education and is included in the \$10 billion need to fund McCleary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Supports a simple majority on local bond issues with \$2 billion needed for building from the state</li> </ul>

### Student Growth & Achievement

Teacher Quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher preparation programs are key to improving instruction</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reconfigure the state salary schedule so beginning teachers are better compensated at get to the top of the schedule quicker</li> </ul>
Statewide Collective Bargaining	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>As a matter of equity she supports statewide bargaining of certificated staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>It is not politically feasible or practical until 100% of all basic education cost are fully paid by the state.</li> <li>Even then, some local bargaining will still be needed.</li> <li>It is critical that the state Legislature define basic education compensation to avoid McCleary II.</li> <li>Has heard from the field that it isn't working and the evaluations system could be part of the solution</li> </ul>
Support for At-Risk Students	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Focus on the whole child; add additional counselors; address social emotional issues before academic learning can take place</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase support to stabilize families and have state resources follow at-risk students</li> </ul>

### Principal Leadership, Development and Collaboration

Professional Development of Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide two state paid training days; partner OSPI with AWSP, WASA, and WSSDA; use technology more effectively</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Time needs to be carved out for PD and that could be part of the grand bargain to resolve the McCleary decision</li> </ul>
Support for Principal Development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Create a closer OSPI/AWSP Partnership to create regional cohorts for training; provide principal mentorships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Preparation of principals needs to be a priority and investments made to have quality leaders in every school</li> </ul>
ESSA	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Has some of the same hammers as NCLB but it could open some doors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Optimistic about the use of multiple measures and disaggregated data but still wants to delink test results from graduation requirements</li> </ul>

### Other

First "Act" as OSPI Superintendent	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Use the first 100 days to look at every area of OSPI to determine what is required by law and focus on productivity</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Evaluate the agency through the Balridge Evaluation Process to move OSPI from being a regulatory agency to an advocacy, data and resource shop</li> </ul>
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# ATTENDANCE MATTERS

Sunnyside's focus on absenteeism aims to improve student outcomes



**James Wise**

*Assistant Principal,  
Sunnyside High School,  
Sunnyside School  
District*

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**T**he school year is off to a fresh start and each morning a steady flow of students can be seen and heard excitedly discussing their hopes for the new school year. Yet even in these early days slight perturbations are evident and signal a not-yet obvious issue that can begin as early as kindergarten and continue through high school, contributing to achievement gaps and ultimately to dropout rates. The issue is absenteeism.

Good attendance is central to student achievement and our broader efforts to improve our schools. All of our investments in curriculum, instruction, and academically focused intervention systems won't amount to much if students aren't showing up to benefit from them.

## ABSENTEEISM AND ACADEMICS

Consistent absence can have consequences throughout a child's academic career, especially for those students living in poverty, who need school the most and are sometimes getting the least. By middle school, chronic absence, commonly defined as missing 10 percent or more of a school year, becomes one of the leading indicators that a child will drop out of high school. By ninth grade, chronic absenteeism is a more accurate indicator of high school dropout than how well a student did on eighth grade tests.

Over the last seven years staff at Sunnyside High School have been successful in transforming the overall culture of the school such that the district graduation rate increased from 49 percent to just above 90 percent. With a goal of graduating 100 percent of all students districtwide the issue of absenteeism is increasingly at the forefront.

Taking lessons learned from the last seven years, SHS is tackling absenteeism by implementing strategies focused on a key aspect of the school — creating a culture in which students have the ability to connect to the school, build powerful relationships, and envision their future.



When a student is absent or tardy the teachers strive to ask two questions of the student: Why were you absent or tardy? And, what support do you need, if any, to avoid the absence or tardy from occurring again?

## CREATING A CULTURE, CONNECTING TO SCHOOL

The school culture is the result of the values inherent in the collective communication of all individuals interacting within the school community. This communication includes words as well as actions, policies, practices, traditions, customs, and any other manner in which students learn what is, or is not, expected of them.

One way in which SHS is creating a culture of strong attendance includes the phrase, "Every Student, Every Period." This phrase can be heard by each teacher as they describe their classroom expectations, by each advisor as they describe the school-wide attendance expectations, by each counselor, by each athletic coach, by each administrator, by each secretary, and by each support person. Similarly, when discussing absences the phrase, "Ten is too many!" is clearly and uniformly articulated to all students.

Another way in which SHS is creating a culture of strong attendance includes basing the foci of school sponsored student activities on academics and/or attendance. For example, school assemblies have been changed to include the sharing of attendance/

academic data, class competitions always have an academic or attendance component, and even the skits are attendance/academic focused. Also, open campus lunch, a privilege open to 11/12 grade students, must be earned by meeting student-set goals partially based on attendance.

We also focus on connecting students to school by building strong relationships. It is challenging for students, or any of us, to meaningfully engage when the feeling of belonging is absent. A phrase uttered throughout the SHS hallways for the last seven years has been "Together We Will" and it is this phrase that inspired the Attendance Coach strategy at SHS.

As soon as a student has reached five absences in any given class they are matched-up with a student who has volunteered to support them with their attendance. The trained student volunteer meets with the struggling student for two weeks providing daily encouragement and support. A staff member regularly monitors the attendance of the student and the support offered by his/her coach. At the completion of the 10 days, and again when the attendance goals are fully met, both students are celebrated. The greatest success of the coaching model is when the coached student is able to subsequently serve as a coach to another student.

## DONUTS OR NO DONUTS?

While the *Attendance Coach* model focuses on supporting improved

*Continued on page 14*

attendance habits by building student-student relationships the SHS attendance support system is initially designed to build up the student-teacher relationship.

When a student is absent or tardy the teachers strive to ask two questions of the student: Why were you absent or tardy? And, what support do you need, if any, to avoid the absence or tardy from occurring again? These are not revolutionary questions but they are questions that are utilized by an increasing number of people beginning with the classroom teacher, followed by the attendance coach, a staff member within an intervention program, an attendance support specialist, the parent/guardian, the administrator overseeing attendance, and finally community members. Each conversation is a demonstration that (1) we are not going to stop asking why and (2) we are not going to stop offering support.

There are many incentives that are utilized within the SHS attendance support system to help inspire improved attendance however none more popular than Donut Day. Once a week I, as the administrator overseeing attendance, purchase six dozen donuts and give them to classes who have perfect attendance. That is, I enter a classroom and ask two questions; Was everyone on time today? Is everyone here today? If the answers are both “yes,” then the entire class gets donuts. Otherwise, no donuts.

There are two particular aspects of Donut Day that make it an effective strategy. First, the donut incentive is the only one based on the collective attendance of a group of students. Students must work together to earn it — and they do. When donut days were instituted there was a marked increase in the level of discourse focused on attendance among students. Few are the times that students do not know why a classmate is absent. They have communicated with them and to a

certain degree demonstrated that they care.

Second, the donuts are accompanied by a short message from a community member invited to share a brief message concerning how (good or bad) attendance has affected their life. The messages are poignant, relevant, and serve to help students envision how developing strong attendance habits can benefit their lives.

## CULTURE OF ATTENDANCE

We know that students are absent for a wide variety of reason and therefore requires many approaches. Not all students are going to be able to have perfect attendance or good attendance due to circumstances out of their control. Furthermore, chronic absence isn't just about truancy or willfully skipping school. Children stay home because of chronic illness, unreliable transportation, housing issues, bullying or simply because

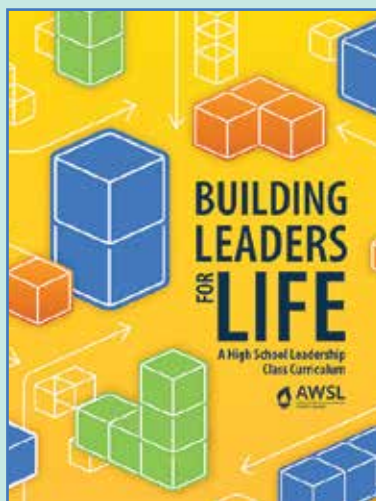
their parents don't understand how quickly absences add up—and affect school performance.

In addition to these school-wide efforts, we analyze students' period-by-period attendance on a daily basis to identify students with the greatest need, the effectiveness of existing support systems, as well as ways to enhance support strategies. Although it can be a significant challenge to reverse a habit of truancy or severe absenteeism, as we've addressed the culture of attendance for the whole school, we have been able to free up staff resources to support the students with the most need.

We have by no means figured everything out, but I hope our experience helps you in your efforts to create a school environment where students want to attend. ■

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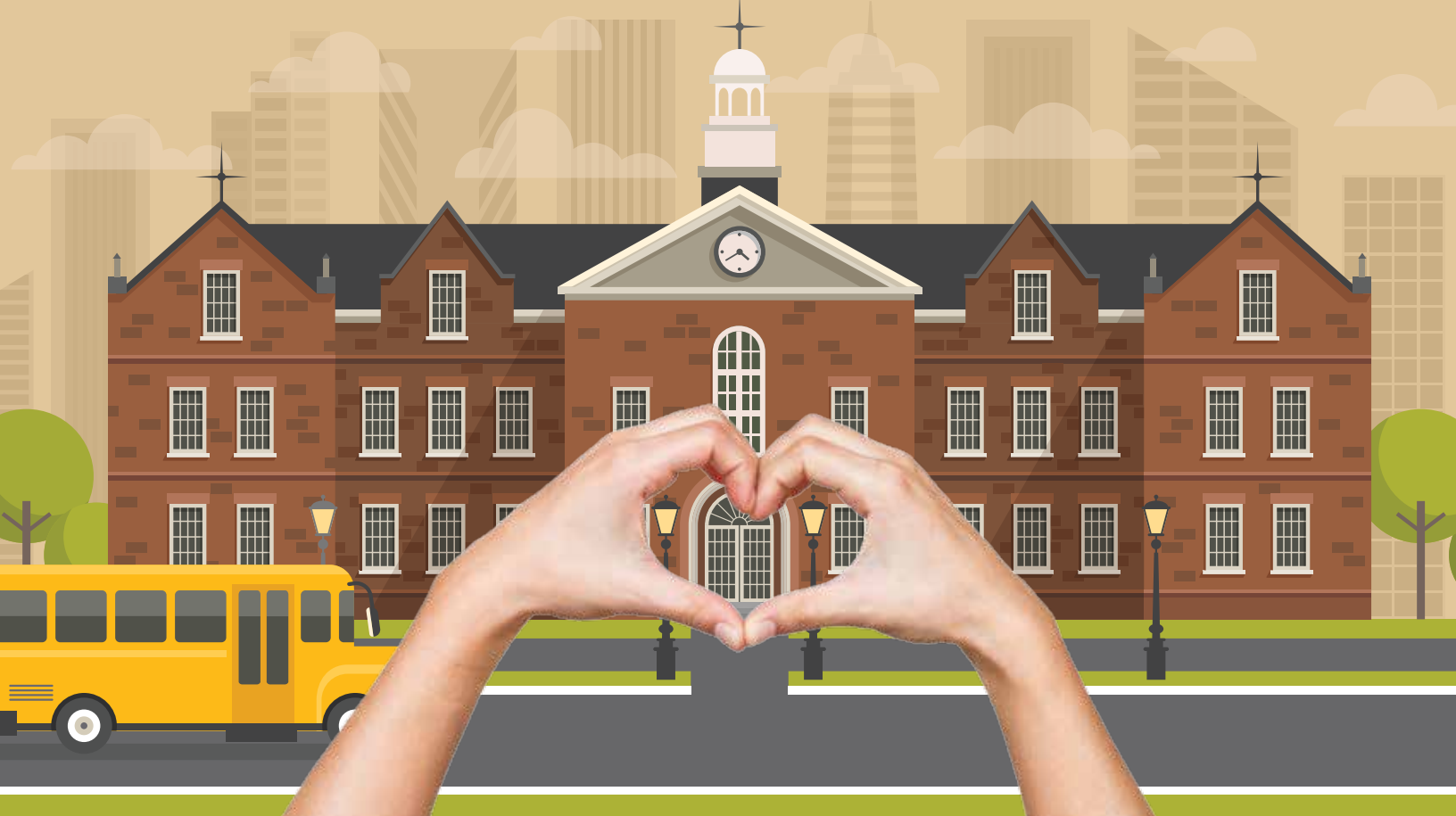
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# Romances WITH SCHOOLS

One principal's tips on rekindling  
your passion for the profession

**Paul Luczak**  
*Retired Principal*

#### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources*

A few years ago, before John Goodlad died, I was among a group of principals who were fortunate to read and discuss his autobiography, "Romances with

Schools" with him. In reviewing John's seven decades of school reform, we were able to find common ground as practitioners. Reflecting on my 50 years of romances with schools, I got to thinking that schools are like a marriage: You have to both

work at it and learn to enjoy one another. You have got to keep your love alive.

I was a teacher for 20 years and a principal for 20. I like to say that I

*Continued on page 16*

Continued from page 15

gained 20/20 vision. Retiring in 2013, I worked as a substitute principal in seven schools. I have known principals who can do the job with élan and observed a few who struggle. While I had my ups and downs, I was able to develop a philosophy and set of guidelines that served me well. I developed a recipe for success over those 20 years.

## THROWN TO THE WOLVES

Research suggests that principals often feel as if they had been “thrown to the wolves” as practitioners who work in relative isolation. A school principal does not have an onsite supervisor. Their area supervisor is often the head of over 15 schools and is the mediator of disputes in all of them. With many other administrative duties on top of that, their work load allows them time for only a few school visits over course of a school year.

“ Build a culture where all employees feel involved and valued. Take care of your people. Listen to them and appreciate them.

Principals stagger under the unwieldy complexity of teacher evaluations. It is not unusual for a principal to evaluate 45-50 employees — supervisory loads that are less than half of that common in the private sector. On top of that, they have many managerial duties and a budget to mind as well. Left to find their way through this terra incognita, it can become too easy for principals to work way too hard on the wrong things. The pressure to show improvement in student achievement can lead some principals to come

to believe that improving student achievement is their *only* job.” It is easy to get off the freeway and onto the back roads.

Here is what I would tell today’s principals:

Yes, student achievement is your main job, but not your only job. Building relationships around growth for all learners is your main job. Your teachers often feel like they are held in contempt by the government, the parents and the press. Build a culture where all employees feel involved and valued. Take care of your people. Listen to them and appreciate them. Spread appreciation and growth oriented feedback like fertilizer and your garden will bloom. Don’t let your evaluations be too technical, put some heartfelt appreciation into them. Stay positive and credible.

## SEEK FEEDBACK FROM A VARIETY OF STAKEHOLDERS

It has been said that “Feedback is the breakfast of champions.”<sup>ii</sup> A caution is that some of the feedback could cause indigestion! Build a team of advisors. Develop systematic ways to learn about what is people are “hearing through the grapevine”. Embrace the “good, the bad, and the ugly” about your school and your leadership. Try not to take it personally, but, if you care you probably will. That is part of the burden of leadership. Never “shoot the messenger” over indigestible feedback. Close your door and scream into a pillow. Network with your peers. Develop a network of critical friends to dialogue over tough decisions and strategies that work. Be involved with the Association of Washington School Principals and our local affiliates.

## GROW SYSTEM THINKERS

“If you can’t manage, you can’t lead,” we used to say in a large suburban district where I worked for 19 years. A wise superintendent told principals

in one of her many moments of candor, “Let’s face it folks. We hire you for leadership, but we fire you for management.” Folks who aren’t system thinkers often spend their time in crisis rather than prevention. Teach your staff from the custodian, to your classified employees to your department heads to be system thinkers. You have to be a visionary who also gets the busses to roll on time.

Strive for positive discipline, but have consequences for poor behavior. That goes for staff, students and parents. Never walk by incompetence. Establish standards. Do everything you can to help students want to be positive. Do not treat anyone unfairly. Never show anyone that you enjoy disciplining them. Develop a system for student behavior rewards and consequences that allows you to focus on the main job of improving the school climate while improving student achievement. Have a positive discipline system where you can develop solutions that center around children’s strengths. While you are at it, focus on employee strengths as well. Grow people as you grow yourself. Empower people and your own power will grow and be much more credible than the simple positional power of trying to get compliance through the statement, “because I am the principal.”

## MARKET YOUR SCHOOL

Be a marketing whiz. Find out what parents want and don’t want in a school and try to *be* that school. Work with parents while remembering that you are a public servant, not a public doormat. Develop your brand as a school. Treasure your PTSA and parent leaders. I once beamed with pride and a little embarrassment when my veteran PTSA President said in front of a crowd, “Many principals see their PTSA as a pain in the butt, but, Paul treats us as full partners at the table.”

## FOLLOW YOUR HEART AND ENJOY THE RIDE

Do what is right and what is important. Pleasing your bosses is important, but don't get buried in the avalanche of district initiatives. Priorities the ones that best match your school's shared vision. Train your boss on how to work with you and understand how the vision of the school community matches that of the district. Help them achieve the work of the district through your "version of the vision."

For goodness sake, have fun. Talk to kids. Laugh with them. Go out on your playground and cafeteria. Touch base with them often. Let them know you and know that you care. Keep balance in your own family and personal life — at least try.

This was my recipe for 20 years. As I look back in retirement, my only regret is that I didn't take time to

“ For goodness sake, have fun. Talk to kids. Laugh with them. Go out on your playground and cafeteria. Touch base with them often. Let them know you and know that you care.

enjoy it more. I believe that you can "have it all." You can be the principal of a school where folks feel like they are part of a family and a school where children achieve at the highest levels.

Have fun, follow your internal compass and keep rekindling your romances with schools. ■

*Paul Luczak taught grades 3-10 and was a principal in four districts. He is a former Danforth Fellow and has been a trainer and Ambassador for AWSP. He was president and founder the East King County affiliate. An AWSP*

*Distinguished Principal, he has been a proud member of the association since 1991. He currently is a part time principal substitute.*

i Goodlad, John. *Romances with Schools* McGraw-Hill 2004

ii Paul Hersey, Ken Blanchard. *Management of Organizational Behavior*. Pearson 2008

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# 2016 WASHINGTON STATE PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR

## ELEMENTARY SCHOOL



**KATE FRAZIER**

LISTER ELEMENTARY (TACOMA P.S.)



## MIDDLE SCHOOL



**MIA WILLIAMS**

AKI KUROSE MIDDLE (SEATTLE P.S.)



## HIGH SCHOOL



**RYAN MAXWELL**

SUNNYSIDE HIGH (SUNNYSIDE S.D.)



**T**houghtful. Helpful. Outstanding. Kind. Students, community members, teachers and staff at Lister Elementary in Tacoma are not short on superlatives when describing their principal, Kate Lister.

Frazier, who came to Lister in 2011 as the building's interim principal, has led a steady pattern of student improvement and academic success. When she first arrived, students were struggling both academically and behaviorally. Working with her staff, Frazier implemented the Positive Behavioral Interventions and Support (PBIS) system, which has seen suspension rates decline and attendance rates increase.

Her continued focus on data and finding ways to narrow the achievement gap have also yielded positive results in the classroom. Student achievement, including test scores, have improved significantly. But Frazier is among the first to admit she has not done this alone, citing partnerships with the students themselves, along with her teachers, staff, families and the greater community.

"I'm just so blown away by it," said Frazier. "When I look at my colleagues and my peers and what they're doing in their buildings, I'm awed by them. To be able to have that nomination with Tacoma and to have it at the state level is unbelievable." ■

**L**ow test scores, high absenteeism. When Mia Williams became principal of Aki Kurose in 2008, she knew the work ahead would not be easy, but it was the right thing to do. Now, eight years later, that work has more than paid off: Test scores are up, absentee rates have been cut in half, and Aki Kurose has consistently had one of the highest growth rates in the district.

"That's the story that doesn't get told," said Williams in an interview with The Seattle Times. "I am most proud of that."

Like her award-winning peers, Williams is quick to credit the work of her entire learning community — students, staff, families and community members — who have helped her reset student learning at Aki Kurose.

"I am excited for the school community as a whole, because, as I tell everybody, you can't get anywhere without everybody playing a role. I wanted to represent the heavy lifting of the students, families and staff who have really wrapped their arms around the school," said Williams.

Dr. Larry Nyland, Seattle Public Schools' superintendent, praised Williams for her leadership and dedication. "Mia's passion for the work she does, shows every day, through her dedication and powerful leadership. This can be seen as soon as you walk through the doors at Aki Kurose, where she and her staff continue to create a culture where students are empowered and given opportunities to learn and grow to reach their full potential." ■

**A**s the winner of the AWSP 2016 High School Principal of the Year Award, his peers, colleagues — even U.S. News & World Report — are suddenly very interested in his game plan for a school that had, for years, failed to graduate even half of its students.

Today, Sunnyside High has an 89 percent graduation rate, a remarkable achievement for a school that had previously been in the bottom fifth percent for Washington state high school graduation rates. In 2007, the school graduated just 42 percent of students.

Maxwell, who has served as Sunnyside's principal for four years and one of the school's assistant principals before that, played an instrumental role in the school's transformation.

"It's more of a school honor," Maxwell told the Yakima Herald. "We are a school that now others are trying to emulate." ■

# WHAT IF MICHAEL FULLAN TACKLED COLIN KAEPERNICK?

## Kurt Hatch

Director of Principal Support, Middle Level Programs, and Diversity & Equity

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**F**ootball fan or not, you are likely aware of the statement on social issues being made by San Francisco 49ers quarterback Colin Kaepernick. You might have a strong opinion on the matter and perhaps have discussed it with a friend, family, colleague or via social media.

Football is deeply seated and alive within many school settings. Often a topic of conversation, it has influence on a number of aspects of the learning environment. For many, football is a source of excitement, tradition and is deeply embedded in mainstream culture. When social commentary, particularly in the form of a protest during the national anthem, is injected into any aspect of our culture, emotions and strong opinions follow. This is often the case whenever the status quo is challenged.

## "GOING THERE"

There are strong opinions about Colin Kaepernick's protest. The topics he is striving to shed light on — inequity and racially motivated injustice — pull forcefully on the fabric of our nation. They both are uncomfortable subjects of conversation for many. Kaepernick's method of protest also carries risk (as Tommie Smith and John Carlos experienced during the 1968 Olympics) and breaks with dearly held societal norms and expectations of conduct. We're



“Challenging the status quo requires a readiness to take chances and push against traditional ways of thinking in order to motivate people and achieve results.”

generally not accustomed to people “going there.”

Challenging the status quo, as Michael Fullan points out in his latest book, “Principal: Three Keys to Maximizing Impact,” is one of seven key components of leadership. However, Fullan also asserts that, when challenging the status quo — particularly with complex and emotional issues such as race and equity — it is important for leaders to be highly skilled at all seven components.

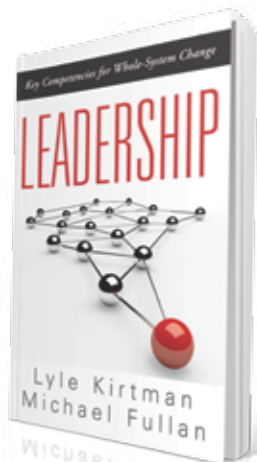
## EFFECTIVE LEADERS

In “Principal,” Fullan refers to Lyle Kirtman’s seven competencies for effective leaders.

According to Kirtman, the first competency of effective leadership is the ability to challenge the status quo. This is an extremely important skill to develop; however, there is risk involved.

Challenging the status quo requires a readiness to take chances and push against traditional ways of thinking





in order to motivate people and achieve results. According to Fullan, challenging the status quo includes the willingness and ability to question common practices...and not let rules slow-down action. Kaepernick is clearly taking a risk by pushing against traditional ways of thinking in order to call attention to issues of social justice and, in doing so, has impacted the status quo.

So, perhaps Fullan would give a slight, yet cautionary leadership-nod of approval, although I suspect he would also extend Kaepernick the same counsel he offers principals in chapter five, "Becoming a Change Agent."

In chapter five, with regard to Kirtman's seven competencies, Fullan explains that, "effective leaders spend time on – get better at – all seven competencies and their interconnections in order that the *whole organization* generates measurable instructional improvement." Effective leaders are not only adept at challenging the status quo, they are also highly skilled at:

- Building trust through clear communications and expectations.
- Creating a commonly owned plan for success.
- Focusing on team over self.
- Having a sense of urgency for sustainable results.

“ Issues of race and equity, although far more deeply and historically embedded in our culture than football, are not frequently heard in mainstream conversations.

- Committing to continuous improvement for self.
- Building external networks and partnerships.

Because the seven competencies take time to master, Fullan encourages younger leaders to “get going on this personal learning agenda” in order to develop as much career capital as possible. Veteran leaders are encouraged to assess their strengths and weaknesses relative to the seven competencies and then get to work on them accordingly. Kirtman has a helpful assessment inventory used to establish an individual leadership profile to begin addressing competencies needing attention. Evaluating your own profile will help ensure your challenges to the status quo on tough issues like race and equity are accomplished effectively.

## CHALLENGING THE STATUS QUO

Issues of race and equity, although far more deeply and historically embedded in our culture than football, are not frequently heard in mainstream conversations. They are complex topics with heavy psychological and sociological weight. Teeming with both suffering and hope, and despite a compelling nationwide need for an ongoing, multilevel and multi-layered dialogue, race and equity-focused conversations are muted by a relatively strong status quo. Hence, for some, Kaepernick's protest is rather troubling and for leaders, effectively challenging the status quo on race and equity is quite daunting.

Perhaps Fullan would applaud Kaepernick for his courage and for instigating a needed dialogue on race while also counseling him to dig

deeply into the leadership inventory as a way to elevate his impact because “passion without skill is dangerous.” The passion needed in order to challenge the status quo “must be earned through actually getting better at leading change.” The more successful you are as a leader, the deeper your passion grows.

Race and unconscious, unintended bias all add to the deep complexity of educational leadership. They also draw upon our passion for equity and justice while causing us to reflect on the reason we gravitated to the profession which — if I may be so bold as to summarize this for everyone — is to help all students, particularly those who need it most, and make the world a better place.

As Fullan points out, an educational leader with all seven competencies to rely on is far better equipped to help all students because he/she has banked a wealth of professional capital both inside and outside the school and therefore “doesn't mind rocking the boat.”

So, in your quest to make the world a better place, AWSP is ready and willing to provide support so you can infuse Kirtman's seven competencies into your practice and begin to effectively challenge the status quo by skillfully and compassionately engaging your staff and school-community in a dialogue on race and equity. ■

# IMPROVING ACCESS TO STUDENT LEADERSHIP



**Randy Heath**

*Executive Director,  
Student and Family  
Support Services,  
Kent School District*

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

**S**ystems are perfectly designed to get the results they get. If we are unhappy with the results we must examine the system and make necessary changes.

Sixty years ago a group of forward-thinking principals who understood the power of student voice and leadership built a system to help teach and cultivate the skills student leaders would need to help shape the climate of their schools. The growth of the student leadership program is proof of the success of this mission.

## DIVERSITY AND ACCESSIBILITY

Tens of thousands of individuals who have participated in the myriad of programs offered by the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL) can attest to their positive experiences and share how the skills they learned through the program helped contribute to future success. I have witnessed this directly as both a consumer (advisor and school administrator) and as a deliverer (past AWSP board member and current middle level leadership camp director) of AWSL programs.

Schools are tasked with preparing students for a global society that is more rapidly changing than at any other time in history. The skills



“ A student body needs to be able to see leaders who look like them, who have the same interests and struggles as them, and who understand their unique strengths and basic needs.

taught through student leadership, collaboration, problem solving, and creativity, among others, are skills all students need to successfully navigate this new world. The ability to apply those skills in real life leadership experiences at their schools will give them an advantage to be the corporate and civic leaders of their time.

The problem is, in too many schools, this opportunity to formally lead is not accessible to all. There are usually no official policies that state that the most popular, the highest achievers, the students with the most means, or Caucasian and Asian students, are more likely to be elected as student leaders. However in many cases, that is who we see chosen and participating in leadership programs. Looking at the crowd of participants at most AWSL events most will be able to quickly identify a lack of diversity.

## BARRIERS TO INCLUSION

Do the chosen student leaders in your school accurately reflect the demographics of your school? School leaders have an obligation to disaggregate their discipline, special programs, and advanced placement data by race, socio-economic status and gender. Student leadership

programs and opportunities within the school and classroom must be added to this list. School leaders must determine if disproportionality exists and, if so, examine the system that has created it. Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.

A principal who takes this challenge and finds an issue with disproportionate numbers should first look to the election process at your school and/or the class requirements for your leadership class. Have arbitrary barriers been institutionalized to allow only a select group of students to have access to leadership? Grade point requirements, discipline and/or attendance rates, class schedules, staff leadership, decision making and selection, teacher choice and/or written essays are all examples of potential barriers you may discover.

There may have been sound reasons why those requirements were put in place but if they are contributing to unfairly impacting any group of students, then they must be addressed. Additionally, if it is unfairly impacting a protected class of students, you have an additional legal obligation to address it.

The benefits of creating a more inclusive student leadership at your school are many. Experienced school administrators understand the power of relationships and creating equity within the system. They know that students who feel connected to their school attend more, achieve at higher rates and contribute to the positive climate of the school.

### MANY VOICES NEEDED

A student body needs to be able to see leaders who look like them, who have the same interests and struggles as them, and who understand their unique strengths and basic needs. Schools that do not have a diverse student leadership sometimes unintentionally create situations

“ There is no single solution to this issue. Every school is unique. When addressing these issues of disproportionality and equity in student leadership, many voices will be needed.

that may alienate students instead of helping them feel included.

Spirit Week is one example. A “Hawaiian,” “redneck” or “nerd” dress up day has the potential to damage relationships. A pep assembly where male football students wear female cheerleader outfits and negatively reinforce stereotypes has the potential to alienate instead of unite. If a more diverse group of students were involved in the planning of school events, then potential issues are more likely to be identified early and events that truly unite planned.

There is no single solution to this issue. Every school is unique. When addressing these issues of

disproportionality and equity in student leadership, many voices will be needed. Diverse groups of staff, community members and, most importantly, students will positively contribute to addressing these issues.

A system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets. This is a system that must be fixed and it is best fixed at the local level by powerful school leaders willing to address tough issues. Much like the pioneering school principals who originally built the student leadership programs, this generation of principals can fundamentally change who has access to and who benefits from them. ■

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# Headscarves and Hotheads

## One school photo prompts a lesson in cultural understanding

**Brent Osborn**

*Principal, Lakeside High,  
Nine Mile Falls SD*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Engaging Communities*



HEADSCARVES: A photo of Lakeside students attending a refugee training at World Relief Spokane drew angry comments from a community member. From left to right: Brooklynn Mathiason, Shaye Swannack, Ahbrianna Gallagher, and Allisyn Swanger.

Recently I came into work and had a voicemail. The message on the phone was very angry and hostile. It had to do with a picture that appeared in a Nine Mile Falls School District newsletter. The photo featured Lakeside students wearing headscarves while participating in a World Relief refugee training. The caption explained that the students were there as a part of their teaching academy and leadership class in order to gain a better understanding of the refugee process, to learn about refugees in Spokane, and learn about ELL students.

The angry caller asked how dare I let our Nine Mile kids wear a burka and hadn't I ever heard of the separation of church and state? He was going

“

I worried about the conclusions that are jumped to simply because three girls were wearing headscarves. The fear that exists based on perceived attire is really quite frightening.

to make sure I get fired or reprimanded by the school board. He did not leave a call back number but assured me, I would hear from him again.

It has been awhile but I have not received a call back. That is unfortunate because I really do want to talk to this gentleman and help him

understand several components of his grievance:

1. The students were role playing the refugee process so that they could better understand the hoops and steps that the refugees to America must go through.
2. Does he know that Spokane receives more than 500 refugees ever year and most of those refugees are actually Christian?
3. The students were wearing scarves and not burkas. A burka is a full face covering used in the Islamic religion. Scarves are actually a very common occurrence throughout the world for women in many religions, particularly in many of the orthodox Christian faiths in Africa and the Middle East. It was

actually Paul in Corinthians that references women should cover their hair.

4. Most importantly, I worried about the conclusions that are jumped to simply because three girls were wearing headscarves. The fear that exists based on perceived attire is really quite frightening.

Recently I traveled to Ethiopia with my family, a beautiful country that has an amazing mix of faith. The country is 63 percent Christian, 35 percent Muslim, and 2 percent are of other faiths. During our visit we were present through one Sunday service and a national holiday for a saint (I forget which one). We witnessed firsthand thousands of people going to church, Christian and Muslim. They looked like the picture in question. All of the women wore scarves, and they looked beautiful.

And yet headscarves on students featured in our newsletter upset a man in our community enough to call me and voice his grievance. I guess that just verifies the importance of the student training opportunity.

I look forward to his call. ■



# THE REST OF THE STORY

## Personalizing student data means going beyond the numbers

**Scott Seaman**

*Director of High School Programs and Professional Development Specialist, AWSP*

### PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources*

### While the state

begins to wade into the water of defining what the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) will look like in Washington, schools continue to operate as normal. Over a million students enter the doors of schools across our state. Each student brings a unique set of skills, talents, dreams and ambitions. These students also bring their hopes, worries, fears and trauma.

While the adults serving on 12 different ESSA workgroups navigate new policy language in the best interest of kids, the students and dedicated adults come and go every day in each and every one of our schools. It's hard to think about the word "each" when we talk about over a million students, but that needs to be the foundation of the state as we move forward. How do we personalize a P-16 experience for each of our students? We too frequently refer to our education system, but what we really want to deliver for kids is a great educational experience.

Those individual stories and contexts are what make our schools incredible environments for learning. Every classroom, every day, for every kid.



It's hard to think about the word "each" when we talk about over a million students...

The school climate ebbs and flows around them as the adults rally to respond to the needs of each child. How do we systematically capture this blanket of individual supports for kids? How do we tell a story that goes beyond what is reported in state testing or an achievement index?

The stories happening in each of our schools are not adequately reflected in state testing results or the Achievement Index. Stories of students and adults working tirelessly to beat the odds, close the gaps, and tackle historical inequities in our system. Stories of perseverance, sacrifice, and unconditional love in the name of providing hope for each and every student. Stories that will go untold, yet carry a lifelong impact on kids in our state. How can we capture in an accountability system these incredible stories of hope instilled in a student's heart and mind?

As public education continues to take a beating in public perception, it is easy to begin pointing fingers or directing the blame at the media. However, maybe we carry more of

the blame. Just imagine if we, the "system," was built to share stories instead of just test scores? Instead of the one "feel good" story at the end of a newscast, we are flooding the market with one million stories of individual students who have the hope, skills, and confidence of college and career readiness.

As I drive by schools in my travels across the state, I don't see a school. I don't see a label or a rating. I don't think about how well the students did or didn't do on a test. I'm not saying testing isn't important, because I understand and believe in accountability, data, and measurement. However, I wonder about all the untold stories that reside within those walls. I wonder about the adults who work diligently to create the best culture possible for each and every student.

So, as you begin interpreting the newest set of statewide testing data, don't forget to find out the rest of the story. If you don't know what it is, go ask the principal. ■



# THE COMP EQUITY

**André Benito Mountain**

Assistant Principal, Larchmont  
Elementary, Tacoma Public Schools

## PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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





# PLEXITY OF

*"Education must begin with the solution of the student-teacher contradiction, by reconciling the poles of the contradiction so that both are simultaneously teachers and students."*

— Paulo Freire

*Continued on page 26*



A major construction project is underway in South Tacoma to dismantle old practices and renovate the current structure of the school community. The scaffoldings are in place to support the work that is underway and as with any change, there is a sense of being unsettled that adds to the excitement of the potential of what is to be. It is a renovation project that has been in the works for years as demographics continue to change and district priorities are squarely focused on the development of the whole child.

## TACOMA WHOLE CHILD INITIATIVE

Nestled in the southernmost corner of Tacoma, Larchmont Elementary is quietly and intentionally creating a structure that supports equity and culturally responsive teaching for a diverse population of students. There is a palpable urgency around the work of social justice in schools. The process of creating equitable learning environments, however, is not a race to the finish, but rather a continuum of dialogue, discovery and reflection that we move along collectively.

Last year, Larchmont experienced a 60 percent decrease in discipline referrals school-wide. This success is a direct result of the intentional efforts of teachers on meeting the social-emotional needs of students in a variety of ways including mentors, brain breaks, responsive feedback, and culturally responsive teaching. Larchmont is part of a cohort of schools participating in the Tacoma Whole Child Initiative (TWCI) in partnership with University of Washington-Tacoma. Additionally, the school is supported by the Tacoma Public Schools' Department of Equity and Academic Excellence which focuses on eliminating disparities among all groups in the district.

The Larchmont Elementary staff has a renewed focus on becoming highly effective at honoring the diversity of the community we serve. Conversations about equity can leave educators unsettled because of the etymological weight of words such as oppression, racism, and white privilege. The complexity of equity is grappling with how teachers confront their own perceptions about social justice and issues of oppression.

According to Adams (2007), "oppressive forces are not part of the natural order of things, but rather the result of historical and socially constructed human forces that can be changed by humans" (p. 30). Open discussions about how to redirect those forces are necessary for leaders focused on fostering a critical consciousness in a school. Developing a critical consciousness in a staff enables them to reflect on situations where schools inadvertently perpetuate inequities.



The complexity of equity is grappling with how teachers confront their own perceptions about social justice and issues of oppression.

## STRUCTURES OF INEQUITY

Confronting our own assumptions about students, families and communities is often the first step in dismantling structures of inequity in a school community. I recently shared my experiences as a learner in a racially divided community in South Georgia with a group of teachers in the Bellevue School District. I discussed the importance of culturally responsive teaching practices from the perspective of the only African-American in a class of 15 students in 1982. During that time, I experienced institutionally embedded structures that systemically perpetuated the marginalization of an entire community of African-American students, creating lasting effects

on academic achievement, parental involvement, and career trajectories.

Teachers who employ research-based instructional practices and leaders committed to social justice are the change agents to ensure the dismantling of those structures. Kozleski (2006) outlined specific steps teachers can take to ensure that their teaching is culturally responsive. She emphasizes:

- Connecting student cultural knowledge with curriculum content
- Leveraging student experiences as a launch point for lessons
- Transcending cultural biases
- Exploring multiple perspectives in studying history
- Fostering student leadership
- Engaging in reflective thinking and writing

Larchmont Elementary enjoys the distinction of being one of the most ethnically diverse schools in the state of Washington. Larchmont is steadily

becoming a beacon of culturally responsive pedagogy, whole-child practices, and equity initiatives in the Pacific Northwest. The demographics of the student body for the 2015-2016 school year were 1 percent American Indian, 3 percent Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, 9 percent two or more races, 13 percent Asian, 19 percent African-American, 26 percent Hispanic and 29 percent white. At present, 80 percent of our staff is white. This is indicative

Continued on page 28

Larchmont Elementary is one of the most ethnically diverse schools in Washington.







of a widening hiring gap in urban school districts that has made the call for more culturally responsive pedagogy an even more challenging undertaking in districts around the country.

During a staff meeting at the start of the year, the principal and I emphasized how the diversity of our school would be a critical strength from which we could pull to enrich the experience of our students. The diversity of languages and cultural backgrounds would afford Larchmont's teachers a wealth of community resources from which to pull throughout the year.

## BOYS AND BOOKS

Our year began with a presentation to our returning staff of an analysis of our discipline data. We presented an analysis of incidents of disruptive behavior and assaults. The data showed that while the school had significantly reduced overall discipline referrals, the data also revealed that over 70 percent of our remaining discipline referrals for disruptive behavior were for male students. We once again found ourselves

immersed in the complexity of equity as it relates to disproportionality of discipline referrals.

Naturally, this led to a reflective discussion about how we could better serve our male students. We were interested in the underlying reasons 50 percent more male students were referred to the office for discipline incidents than females? What are some strategies we could use to better support our male students? How are other schools and districts closing the gender gap in student achievement? As we launch into a new year, those are a few of the driving questions that are helping us craft a vision to address the needs of our students.

In his book, "Boys of Few Words: Raising Our Sons to Communicate and

Connect," Adam Cox highlights the growing demands for communication skills in a society where collaboration and social perception are key components to success. He suggests that parents support their boys in bridging the communication divide by practicing greetings and good-byes, modeling how to give compliments, giving guidance about conversational transitions, and providing feedback on their communication skills.

In order to help students, especially boys, communicate their emotions, we have implemented the Zones of Regulation which provides a framework for teachers to support students in identifying which zone they are in and to associate that zone with a concurrent emotion.

The American economy rests upon the strength of collaboration, negotiation and partnerships. Fostering school communities that provide opportunities for students to hone those skills at an early age is worth the investment of time and resources. The American economy rests upon the strength of collaboration, negotiation and partnerships.

DAVID MORRILL/AWSP



Larchmont Assistant Principal André Mountain spends lunchtime listening to, and talking with, students.

DAVID MORRILL/AWSP



“ The American economy rests upon the strength of collaboration, negotiation and partnerships.

## CONCLUSION

So as it is with the growth of a child, schools develop uniquely depending upon the sociocultural context and the pedagogical practices in place within the school. Priorities change in relation to students' needs. Oppression, bias, and inequity are realities in schools and communities. Ignoring them only perpetuates the cycle of disengagement and marginalization of the most challenged students in our schools. The catalyst, and arguably the most difficult task for any educator and leader, is initiating and sustaining a conversation about issues of equity not as an indictment, but rather an invocation for social justice. ■

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Read more from André on his blog, *The Mountain Principles*, at

**andremountain.  
wordpress.com**

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# The Value of Cispus



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MARTIN E. FORTIN, JR.



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

**T**his year marks 35 years that the Association of Washington School Principals, through its foundation, has operated the Cispus Learning Center. The mission of Cispus is to furnish functional, aesthetically sound facilities and curricular resources for supporting outdoor education and leadership training to young people. The AWSP strategic plan

encourages us to be a national leader in providing unique, high-quality residential learning laboratories.

AWSP's renowned student leadership program has been using the Cispus site since 1970 — well before the Principals' Education Foundation acquired the special use permit from the U.S. Forest Service to administer the camp. I am a beneficiary of the AWSP student leadership program at Cispus. As an incoming high school senior and elected student leader, I attended the Mt. Rainier session in that summer of 1970. The experience opened my eyes to many possibilities and inspired me to become a teacher, coach, and ASB adviser. Subsequently I joined the Mt. Olympus leadership camp staff, and eventually became the director of the Mt. Baker leadership camp staff. After 16 years in public schools, I followed a dream to come back to Cispus.

AWSP is unique among principal associations across the nation in that we operate residential learning centers for the benefit of our students statewide. Even though we have been fiscally sound, and have a clearly stated purpose, it is important that we examine the value of this aspect of the association.

To gather input for this column, I posted a request on Facebook: *"I need some help. I have an article due for the Washington Principal magazine. If anyone has a story about how Cispus, Chewelah Peak, or Dare to Dream changed your life I would love to include it in my story. I called for this kind of help a couple of years ago and had a great response and a number of moving testimonials. The time is right to tell a similar story again... any takers?"*

The response was immediate, and the first stories were about Cispus. Since Cispus has hosted leadership camps the longest I was not surprised. Here is a sample of the responses I received:







*"I have been blessed to serve as a senior counselor for multiple AWSP-sponsored state student leadership camps at the Cispus Learning Center since the summer of 2001. Since my first summer on staff of the Mt. Triumph Leadership Camp I have grown in my professional career from classroom teacher to activities coordinator to high school assistant principal to high school principal. I credit my entire leadership philosophy and skill set to the amazing students I have learned from each summer and the incredibly dedicated, wise, and loving educators I have been honored to call colleagues. I am a better educator, a better citizen, and a better person because of the amazing student delegates, college-aged junior counselors, and adult staff I get the privilege of learning from each summer." - Ryan Akiyama, Principal, Yelm High School*

*"Traditionally, Cispus and Washington Student Leadership are seen as creating diverse learning opportunities for students across our state. However, my experience of learning and growth came as a young teacher. I was involved in student activities and leadership throughout all of my school experience. But as a young ASB adviser and new teacher, I needed support that I couldn't describe to others. I was the only teacher of my 'content' in my school. However, I had the opportunity to be part of a leadership camp staff. I thought I was going to work as part of the camp staff, but what I did not expect is that I would learn more from the experience than I taught to others. Life teaches you lessons when you least expect them. I learned that the key to unlocking a student's potential doesn't sit in content, but in the connection and experiences*

*our students share with each other and with us. Through my Cispus experience I learned about engagement strategies for a group that I use on a daily basis. My network of connections, skills, and experiences I developed from Cispus has far exceeded my days as a leadership adviser, and they are at the core of the fabric the makes me who I*

*am." - Dr. Joshua Meek, Assistant Superintendent, Moses Lake School District*

**“** Camp is a place filled with strangers all over the state who love me for who I am regardless of my past or future.”

*"I was a delegate at Mt. Adams leadership camp for two years then served as a junior counselor for two more years. I grew up in a pretty intense environment. Both of my parents are Vietnamese immigrants and their culture has certain expectations and lifestyle choices that caused me to be fairly lost: I was a young girl who did her best to grow up right in the middle of two very different cultures. I was constantly bouncing between anger and sadness. After my first summer at Mt. Adams, my life made a complete 180 degree turn for the better. Camp is a place filled with strangers all over the state who love me for who I am regardless of my past or future. Curriculum at Adams also taught me the essentials*

*to being a servant leader and after hearing how those essentials apply to life through keynote speeches by senior counselors I was able to leave camp as a better daughter, friend, student, and member of society. I am forever in a debt of gratitude to a camp that literally SAVED my life, and am blessed to have received so many opportunities to return and serve the delegates as those before had served me." - Alisha Nguyen, student*

These are just three of the myriad posts that popped up almost immediately. From leadership training to outdoor school, it's clear the opportunities provided by AWSP learning centers have far reaching impact. Without the vision of the leaders of our association so many years ago we would not have these stories. And it is the dedication of the association's leadership today that has continued to provide the access to life changing experiences.

To read more comments about AWSP's Outdoor Learning Centers and Student Leadership, visit [www.awsplearningcenters.org](http://www.awsplearningcenters.org). ■



# Every Student Succeeds Act



**Dr. Gil Mendoza**  
*Deputy Superintendent,  
K-12 Education, OSPI*

**A**s we embark on implementing the newly authorized federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), it is worthwhile to reflect upon where we came from, what we wanted to change in that old reality, and what lessons we learned through the strengths gained during our trials and tribulations under the last federal law.

## THE BIRTH OF 'NICKELBEE' AND ESSA

Attending a national seminar in Washington, D.C. just before the actual passage of our new law, when it seemed imminent to all, I had the opportunity to listen to one of the national leaders for National Public Radio, who offered the chance to do a radio spot with him on ESSA and NCLB. He wanted it to be in the form of a “spoof” interview, as if we were eulogizing the passing of NCLB, the “person.” I reluctantly agreed.

During the course of our conversation I shared with him that “Nickelbee” (the former No Child Left Behind Act or NCLB) was born a wonderful child for whom we all had high hopes, although some, even at his birth, had expressed reservations about how the genetic experimentation and accompanying expectations might cause negative reverberations in our world. These concerns came to pass and Nickelbee grew up to become a bully. He made good people do bad things to themselves and others (especially children), in the form of nasty letters depicting self-loathing, personal name-calling

and interference in their financial undertakings. When it became evident we could not escape his tyranny, we first sought redress directly from him, asking for “waivers” from his oppression, and eventually from his parents, seeking their intercession to our plight. They agreed and we were gifted with “ESSA.” She is our new hope. She is about creating a framework to advance equity. This is our priority and hope for a newly defined reality. Our opportunity is to use access to federal funding to advance our own equity agenda; autonomously and with broad-based ownership. It is about the art of possibility.

“Most importantly we finally stood up to the bully and took a strong position to make the statement that our work is NOT an evaluation of students! I repeat, it is NOT an evaluation of students, but of our respective systems working together.

## FINDING THE GOOD

Before we delve into her positive attributes, let us reflect on a lesson my mother taught me: that even the worst person is a “good” bad example, and we can take solace that they may have taught us something that could be good. And so it was with Nickelbee: He caused us to develop defense mechanisms to escape his bullying. We created more robust standards for ourselves, aligned tests to show our students’ learning, designed more involved data systems to offer proof to our claims that we were working hard and making positive progress

toward the bully’s expectations.

We all came closer together to collaboratively and interdependently re-create a roadmap with guides for a preferred future. Most importantly we finally stood up to the bully and took a strong position to make the statement that our work is NOT an evaluation of students! I repeat, it is NOT an evaluation of students, but of our respective systems working together. This includes everyone from the local, to the state, and to the federal level. It involves parents, businesses, political leaders, public servants, both private and public enterprises and, yes, the students we are committed to serving.

Thank goodness we learned a lot and, to some degree, agreed with some of the more altruistic expectations and strategies for meeting them. ESSA will demand some of the same, although she will allow us more self-governance and magnanimity in how we address the equity mission our work is about.

## THE WORK AHEAD

We still must hold all students to high academic standards and prepare them for success in college and careers. Our state — not the feds — will select the



# ct (ESSA)

content and achievement standards. Our districts will still choose the curricula to accomplish this.

We still must hold ourselves accountable and guarantee that when students fall behind, steps are taken to help them and their schools; focusing on those most in need. Models for closing funding gaps will be revisited to address this agenda. New under ESSA we will have expanded spending options. We will be able to “blend” funding streams to more adequately serve the whole child, focusing on the individual, not the silos of federal bureaucratic rules.

We still must ensure that parents and educators have quality information about how students are doing and this will continue to be reported out by subgroup.

We still must protect students from low-income families, students of color, English language learners, and students with disabilities from being taught at disproportionate rates by ineffective, inexperienced, and out-of-field teachers.

Newly defined, and to better efficiency and effectiveness, we must empower state and local decision makers to develop their own strong systems of support. Schools and districts will be held accountable for student success and the state — not the feds — will be responsible for designing and implementing “consequences.” Our goal is that these will be strengths or assets based, without the accompanying negative constructs previously applied, and with resources to support intended positive outcomes.

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION



President Obama signs the Every Student Succeeds Act into law on December 10, 2015.

To this preferred future we have held multiple regional forums and focus group meetings designed to gather broad-based public input on how our state could implement key areas of the Every Student Succeeds Act. Together we want to capitalize on the opportunity for our state to create a new accountability system (while considering our state laws), including defining an accountability system that will be fair, reliable, easier to understand and more meaningful for kids and parents.



We still must hold all students to high academic standards and prepare them for success in college and careers.

We have established an interactive website with hyperlinks to the 13 workgroups deliberating on and making recommendations to our state superintendent on multiple issues that must be addressed in our newly designed Consolidated State Plan. More than 1,600 individuals have subscribed to the interactive website with hundreds more

represented across the workgroups. We will submit our plan to the U.S. Department of Education this December. A draft will be available on our website for public review and comment before that time. We will hold several more public forums across the state to receive input to our draft plan. Recommendations which will undergird our state plan, which have been approved by the state superintendent are posted on our website.

## A TRANSITION YEAR

The 2016-17 school year will serve as a transition year between NCLB and ESSA, with full implementation of our state plan under ESSA occurring in 2017-18. While our plan will likely be submitted and approved before final federal regulations are established, we will have the opportunity to review and revise our plan on an annual basis. Let us look forward with positive presuppositions and collaborative work. Be involved in our hope for a future system based upon equity and fairness. ■

*Dr. Gil Mendoza is the deputy superintendent at the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. He can be contacted at [gil.mendoza@k12.wa.us](mailto:gil.mendoza@k12.wa.us).*

To stay current on this evolving work and sign up for updates, visit our OSPI ESEA/ESSA website at [k12.wa.us/ESEA/ESSA/default.aspx](http://k12.wa.us/ESEA/ESSA/default.aspx)



Our quarterly profile of educational leadership in Washington state.

## State Representative **Kristine Lytton** D-Anacortes

WASHINGTON STATE LEGISLATURE



*State Rep. Kristine Lytton, D-Anacortes, is the 2016 recipient of the AWSP Torch of Leadership Award for her commitment to K-12 education during the 2016 legislative session. Lytton, who chairs House Finance Committee, was the prime sponsor of House*

*Bill 2366, directing the Legislature to eliminate school district dependency on local levies for basic education funding by the end of 2017. The Legislature approved and Gov. Inslee signed the Senate version of the bill (SB 6195) into law.*

### **How did education become an area of focus for you in the Legislature?**

I became involved volunteering in schools when my two boys began kindergarten. I wanted the same great experience my children had, for every child in our schools. While serving on my local school board, I became interested in education policy at the state level. While education is what motivated me to run for the Legislature, I understand that there are many issues facing the children of our state beyond what happens in the classroom. My goal is to make a positive impact on the children of our state.

“ I wanted the same great experience my children had, for every child in our schools.

### **What is the biggest challenge the Legislature faces in addressing student needs at the state level in the 2016 session?**

Fully funding education.

### **Have you seen any changes in the way the Legislature functions since you were elected? If so, what's changed?**

In order to not become like “the other Washington,” we need to focus on working together. Quite frequently the politics of an issue overshadows good policy. I like to remember a very simple moto: Work hard and be nice.

### **What has had the most influence on your thinking about education reform?**

Being passionate about children and having the desire to expand opportunities for all students.

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

I love spending time with my family, camping, fishing, and hiking.

“ In order to not become like “the other Washington,” we need to focus on working together. Quite frequently the politics of an issue overshadows good policy.

### **What book is on your nightstand?**

You'll find a lot of briefings and articles on Washington state's policies and what other states are doing that may serve as an example to Washington. I love to read historical novels; I just have a hard time finding the time.

### **What is one lesson that you have learned that you would like to share with principals?**

First of all, thank you for your work as educational leaders. Stay focused and keep trying to do good, productive work. ■

# Community Building: Taking a Page from the Seahawks' Playbook

**Gary Kipp**

*AWSP Executive Director*

## Prior to the first

Seahawks game this year, I was as curious as anyone about what stance they would take with regard to the national anthem. Political statements were being made throughout the league to protest the relationship between police and the African-American communities. When I heard that the Seahawks wanted to do something that symbolized the building of a sense of community — of bringing people together, rather than separating them — I was intrigued. I was particularly interested, because that is what principals are challenged to do every day. I wondered if there were lessons we could learn from the Seahawks' approach to this goal that could be applied to schools.

In researching their statements and actions, I have landed on three specific lessons for principals:

**1) Find time to discuss, research strategies and prepare.** As the team noted on its website, "It took the Seahawks weeks of discussion, which included player meetings in groups large and small, as well as meetings with Dr. Harry Edwards, a sociologist whose area of focus includes sports, family, race and ethnic relations, and former NBA great Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, before the Seahawks decided on their plan for Sunday's National Anthem, during which they stood together with arms interlocked."



“ I wondered if there were lessons we could learn from the Seahawks' approach to this goal that could be applied to schools.

Planning ways for a teaching staff to engage the community, both individual members of the community and groups within it, takes time. Time with staff is a precious commodity in schools today for principals, but schools where significant community connections have occurred have not accomplished this without a school-wide focus.

**2) Follow-through behind the scenes.** The demonstrations during the national anthem are getting all of the attention, but the solutions are found in actions beyond the spotlight. According to Seahawks cornerback Richard Sherman, "Gestures mean nothing without follow-through. That's what Harry Edwards said, and that's what I agree with. People get confused think, 'You've got to go out there and put on a show and make this gesture and make people aware of it.' We're more about action. We go out there to the community and help kids, we go into the inner city and try to impact them that way."

*Continued on page 34*

Connecting a school to its community is the result of regular interactions between principals and members of the community, between teachers and parents, it's not just Open House or Friday's football game. It is nurtured over a long period of time in creative and inviting ways.

- 3) Listen.** "You hear our message, now listen," said Seahawks wide receiver Doug Baldwin. "Now we're going to do the same thing on our front; we're going to listen. We need to know the perspective of other people. The greatest tragedy for any human being is going through their entire lives believing the only perspective that matters is their own." Defensive end Michael Bennett added, "Collaboration is one of the greatest things that a human being can do."

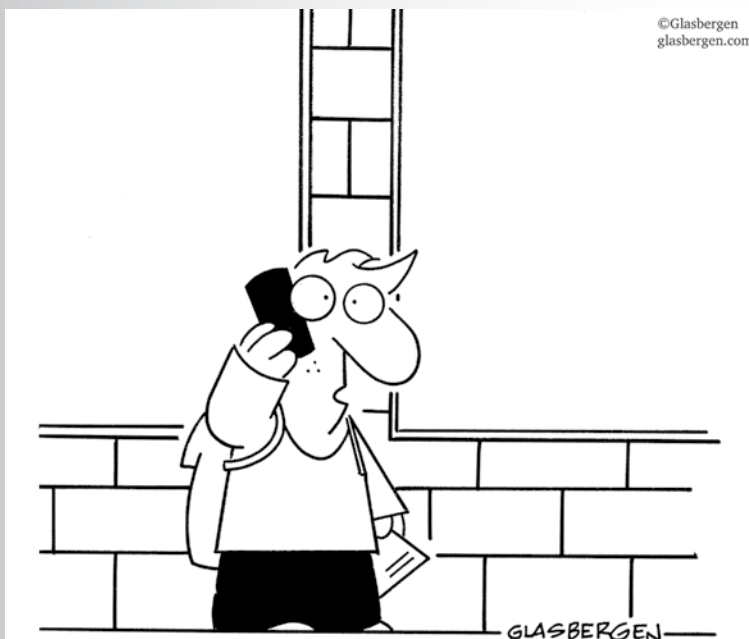
This seems so simple and almost goes without saying, but so often we think that our primary responsibility in building community is to share with parents how Johnny is doing in school. Learning about Johnny by listening to parents is really the first step in starting the collaboration that is so critical to Johnny's success.

Whether you agree or not with the Seahawks' actions during the national anthem, the story behind their actions reminds us that building community, which is one of the principal's responsibilities, takes hard work, planning, listening and follow through. A good reminder, for sure. ■

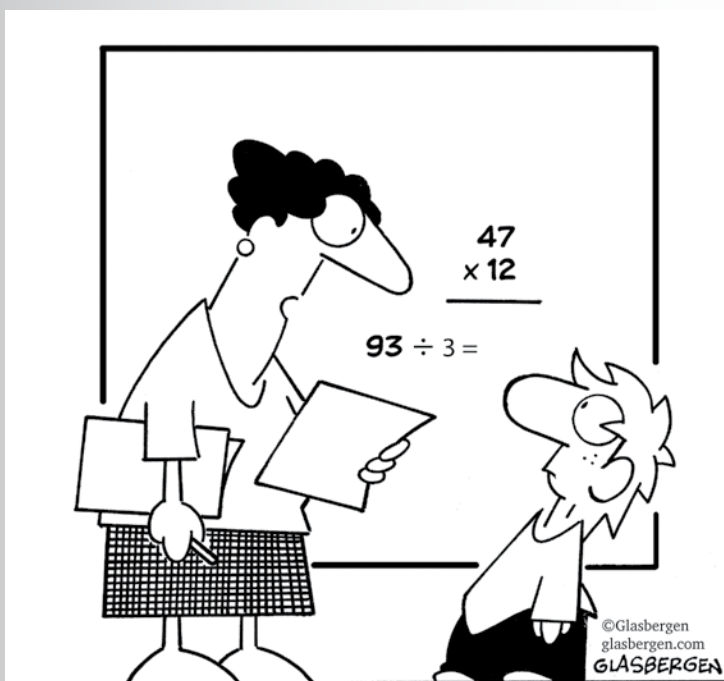


*Gary Kipp has served as AWSP's executive director since 2003. He has more than 40 years experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent.*

# Humor me!



**"I failed my grammar test. I used the wrong emoticon at the end of a tweet."**



**"Yes, love is the answer...but not on a math test."**



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