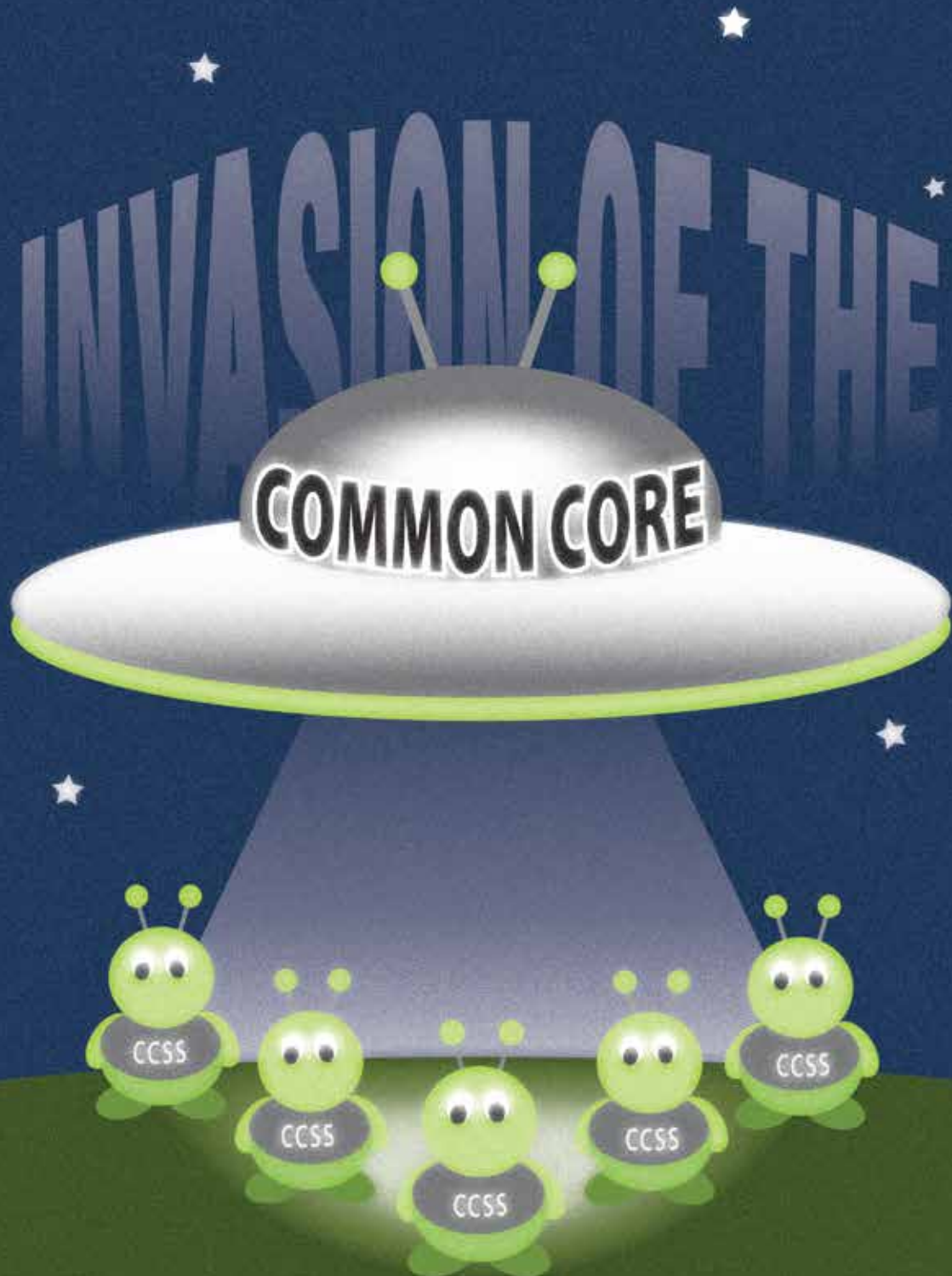


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WashingtonPrincipal

Managing Editor, Linda Farmer, APR • lindaf@awsp.org

Printing, Sundance Press • www.sundancepress.com

Design, Scott Hamilton Design • www.scotthamiltondesign.com

Washington Principal is the official publication of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). It is published in the fall, winter and spring each school year. Advertising inquiries should be addressed to the AWSP Olympia office. All articles published become the property of AWSP and may not be reprinted without permission.



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Confessions of a Kindergarten Mom

School culture isn't just a concept. It takes daily nurturing by the principal and others

By Linda Farmer, APR

Managing Editor, Washington Principal

I enjoyed kindergarten. And now I'm being promoted to first grade. Er, my daughter, that is.

You may recall my nervousness about sending my daughter off to kindergarten last fall. Truth be told, it wasn't her I was worried about. She's made new friends, learned to count to 100 in Spanish and is reading above grade level.

No, it was me: I didn't want to become one of "those" parents. The over-questioning, over-bearing, over-everything type. But as a working parent, I didn't want to be absent, either. Striking that balance was a bit tricky, but, between my husband and me I think we covered most of our bases.

Aside from a bus route fiasco the first two days of school, the kindergarten experience has been most pleasant. And I fully credit the principal for the culture he nurtured this year at school. The teachers and certificated staff carry out that culture every day. And the kids, whether they know it or not, contribute as well.

It's been satisfying to see this play out in real life. Since coming to AWSP in 2011, I've learned about the critical role a principal plays in the success or failure of a school. As you are no doubt aware, principals will be held accountable for eight different success points—culture being one—in the new evaluation system.

In my daughter's school, one of the characteristics of the culture is that parents play a key supportive role in the education process. For us it is the most important role we play.

As the crunch of June falls on the principals' shoulders, I just wanted to say thank you from one kindergarten mom. ■



Linda Farmer, APR is the Director of Communications and Business Partnerships for AWSP. She serves as Managing Editor for Washington Principal.



New look, improved functionality for www.awsp.org

AWSP is rolling out a completely revamped website later this month. You'll be able to:

- Find things easily
- Complete top tasks quickly
- Access new features

The site will feature a streamlined log-in process, more intuitive navigation, shorter pages, and a dizzying array of resources tied to the AWSP Leadership Framework and other key topics. Visit www.awsp.org sometime after Summer Conference.

Introducing the Washington Educators' Conference

Say hello to the Washington Educators' Conference. AWSP is joining forces with the Washington Association of School Administrators, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction and the Washington State Association for Supervision & Curriculum Development to put on the Washington Educators' Conference this fall.

This joint offering is a pilot. It replaces the individual events each organization would have held this fall. "Together

Mc Mullen retiring after 12 years

Bob Mc Mullen is trading his dress shoes and ties for a bike helmet and backpack. Mc Mullen, AWSP's Director of High School Programs and School Safety since 2001, is retiring this summer. During his tenure at AWSP, he has provided leadership support for school improvement principals, and served as a liaison to the HEC Board, State Board of Education and OSPI school safety initiatives.

Mc Mullen's favorite part of the job has been his work with the high school governing board of AWSP. "There are very few high school leagues in Washington that aren't participating in our professional development," he reflected. "Seeing the willingness of these principals to grow, to move to the edge of their own comfort zone, that has been gratifying to me."

Before coming to AWSP, Mc Mullen was an English teacher and administrator for 18 years at Kentridge High School in the Kent School District, and for 14 years at Kennewick and Kamiakin high schools in the Kennewick School District. He was Kamiakin's third principal from 1991 to 2001. He graduated from Whitworth University and holds a master's in English and American literature from Western Washington University.

Mc Mullen and his wife, Char, are avid hikers and travelers. They have tramped around nearly a dozen foreign countries (and counting!) as well as their beloved Pacific Northwest. Mc Mullen will consult on educational leadership issues locally when not traveling with Char and visiting their three adult children in Seattle, Portland and Boise.

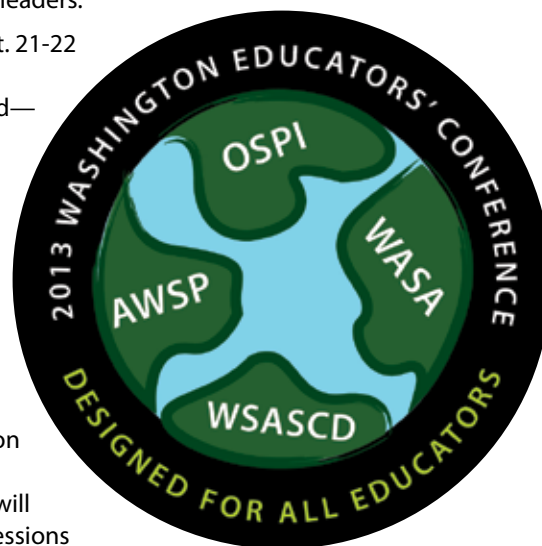


we're better," said Paula Quinn, AWSP's Director of Professional Development. "Principals don't have the budget or the time to attend multiple events. By teaming up we all win. So far this idea is really resonating with building leaders."

The conference will be held Oct. 21-22 at the Doubletree Hotel at the airport. All educators are invited—principals, assistant principals, deans of students, superintendents and central office directors, and teachers and teacher-leaders.

The theme is "Engagement: Shaping the Education World." National and local speakers will cover the hot issues: teacher-principal evaluation, Common Core, technology and Smarter Balanced. The conference also will feature dozens of concurrent sessions

on timely topics. Registration available soon. www.awsp.org/wec.



Greene jumps in on principal evaluation training

AWSP has hired National High School Principal of the Year Trevor Greene to help the association train members in the implementation of the new principal evaluation protocols. Building administrators will need professional development in order to use the new system effectively. For the 2013-14 school year, Greene will take a one-year leave from his post as principal of Toppenish High School. He will team with AWSP's Paula Quinn and Scott Seaman. The addition of Greene to the professional development team will enhance AWSP's ability to offer training and support regionally across the state during this critical time. This position is funded through the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation.



Sharratt to head student achievement council

Gov. Jay Inslee appointed Gene Sharratt to head the Washington Student Achievement Council (WSAC) this spring. Sharratt, a longtime AWSP member, has been serving as the project manager for the association's Leadership Framework. WSAC is a cabinet-level agency that replaces the defunct Higher Education Coordinating Board. The council is charged with compiling a 10-year road map for higher education, making recommendations on strategy and resources. It oversees state student financial aid, the GET prepaid tuition program, sets college admission standards and more.



Seaman joins AWSP staff

Scott Seaman has accepted the position of Director High School Programs at AWSP. He is principal at Tumwater High School in the Tumwater School District, and an active AWSP member. He steps into the role this summer. He succeeds Bob Mc Mullen who is retiring after 12 years at AWSP.

In addition to his high school duties, Seaman will help AWSP increase support and professional development for principals as they implement principal evaluation, Common Core and Smarter Balanced.

Seaman has been with Tumwater since 2001 and was featured on the cover of AWSP's "Principal News" magazine in fall 2011 for his work transforming the culture of the school. Seaman was Tumwater's assistant principal starting in 1998 and before that he was a Spanish teacher at Capital High School from 1994-1998.

Seaman earned a master's degree in educational administration and his principal credential from Seattle University. He earned a bachelor's in foreign language (emphasis in Spanish) from Washington State University, and recently received his superintendent credential from WSU. He graduated from Olympia High School (Olympia SD) and married his high school sweetheart, Michelle, also an Olympia High School and WSU grad. They live in Olympia and have two school-age kids, Madeline and Nathan.



School PR association honors AWSP with 5 communication awards

The Washington School Public Relations Association honored AWSP in May with five awards in its annual Publication and Electronic Media Awards program. The awards recognize outstanding education printed publications, photographs, newsletters and an array of electronic communications.

Awards include:

- **Award of Excellence:** External Print Newsletter (Principal Matters)
- **Award of Merit:** Excellence in Writing (Gary Kipp)
- **Award of Merit:** Special Purpose Publication (Washington Principal Magazine)
- **Award of Merit:** Special Purpose Publication (Principals Conference Program)
- **Honorable Mention:** Annual Report (2011-12 AWSP Highlights)



If I only knew then what I know now

Reflections on 27 years in the principalship

Jeff Miller, AWSP President

I will be retiring at the end of this school year. I'll be ending a 34-year career in public education, 27 of those years spent as a school principal.



This year I've been reflecting on the things I've learned in my role as a principal. Of course, some strategies and philosophies were learned in graduate college classrooms, others were learned on the job in a "trial by fire" mode. But the most valuable were learned through collaborative discussions with my fellow principals in my region, across the state and around the nation.

I often say to myself, "If I only knew then what I know now." Here are some of the big lessons I have learned and tried my best to live by:

- Our main job is to know and lead the educational mission and vision of our buildings and help inspire others to do the same. Management and technical aspects of this job, though complex and important, are really just the simple and straightforward part of our work.
- The philosophy that "because I am the principal, I have the power," also known as Power of Position, is the weakest form of power that any leader can exercise. Reverent Power, which is based in trust and mutual respect, is a much higher form of power.
- It is always best to listen to the wisdom of others before stepping on your own soapbox to preach your personal wisdom and philosophy.
- If you care for others in their time of need, both personally and profession-

ally, they will be there for you in your time of need.

- It is more important to give praise to others than to receive praise for your own accomplishments.
- Always be quick to listen, slow to speak, and slow to anger.
- Every hill is not a hill worth dying on,

personally or professionally. Choose your battles carefully.

This is a business where the human dynamic is ever present. It is all about building and sustaining quality relationships with everyone you work with and everyone you are called upon to serve.

West's book explores teacher engagement

In her new book, Cathie West provides education leaders at all levels with the tools and guidance to engage teachers in the process of increasing student achievement. West, who is principal at Mountain Way Elementary (Granite Falls SD), provides authentic examples and research highlights so readers learn how to develop a motivated faculty that is truly dedicated to school improvement and student success.

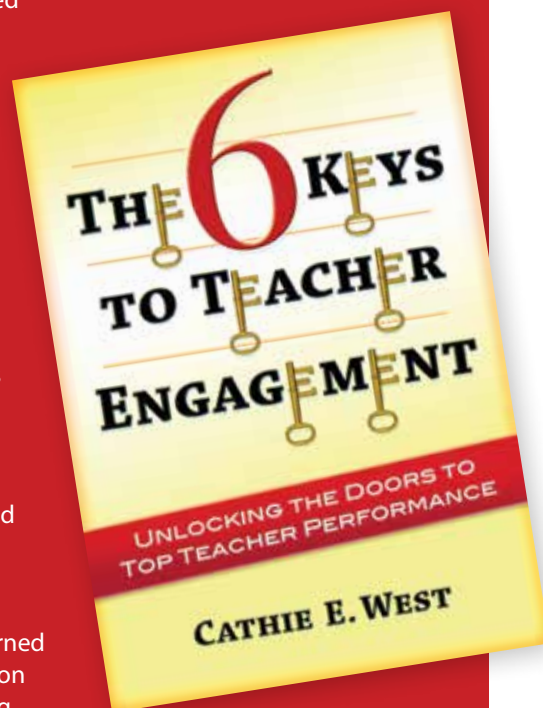
The six keys are:

- Create a culture of engagement
- Get organizationally engaged
- Engineer engagement
- Zero in on best practice
- Tap into teacher leaders
- Confront change challengers

Every chapter includes a wrap-up, a list of high-impact strategies, and suggestions for activities that will move new concepts and skills into practice.

"Improving student performance succeeds only when teachers are as highly engaged as their leaders," said West in an interview with AWSP. "My book shares what successful instructional leaders have learned about gaining teacher attention and commitment, engineering improved professional practice, and strengthening student performance."

West is retiring at the end of this school year with 35 years of experience as an elementary principal. She has been an active AWSP member, most recently serving on the Communications Advisory Committee. This is West's second book. In 2011, she published "Problem-Solving Tools and Tips for School Leaders." Learn more about her books at www.eyeeoneeducation.com/Authors/Cathie-West.



Unexpected Public Confrontation

New research on principal behavior to be unveiled at Summer Conference. AWSP members aided in the work.

By Sheila Gerrish

*Principal, Cedarcrest Middle School
Marysville SD*

By John Bond

*Associate Professor of Educational Leadership
Seattle Pacific University*

Over the last several months in cooperation with AWSP, we have been investigating how practicing principals in Washington deal with unexpected public confrontation. This research focuses both on the beliefs and values that underlie leadership behavior (the whys) and the subsequent strategies and techniques that principals use in such situations (the whats).

At the WASA-AWSP Summer Conference in Spokane this month, we will facilitate a concurrent session focusing on the practical application of reflection-in-action. We hope you'll join us. A full report of the research findings will be made available this summer and will be housed in AWSP's new online resource library.

Every principal occasionally faces the potential terror of being verbally attacked in public. How the principal deals with these high profile situations becomes intertwined with his or her legacy and the folklore of the school. It is a high-stakes matter that deserves more attention than is often given.

Ethics and the AWSP Leadership Framework

Part of the AWSP Leadership Framework includes an ethical dimension that says principals are moral agents and are expected to act with integrity and in an honorable manner. While the AWSP Leadership Framework is aligned

with the ISLLC Standards, there is no evaluation criterion that specifically measures conformity to an ethical code of behavior. Rather, the responsibility for ethical behavior is embedded throughout the eight criteria.

While there are widespread disagreements throughout the world—and even in our own society—about what

p. 26). The school principal is regularly confronted with situations that require an immediate response, often with the eyes of others on them.

When familiar routines present themselves, professionals draw on a reservoir of knowledge, or knowing-in-practice, and often act without conscious reflection (Schön, 1987). Effective

The leader who has considered ahead of time what behaviors she wishes to demonstrate when strong emotions arise, will have something to draw upon in that split-second moment of surprise.

specific behaviors are considered right or wrong, Barrow (2007) suggests five defining characteristics of moral viewpoints: fairness, respect for persons as ends in themselves, freedom of choice, truth and well-being. While school leaders differ in many ways, it is important they all understand the importance of engaging in behavior consistent with generally accepted principles of moral action.

What is reflection-in-action?

Reflection-in-action is the “thinking on your feet” that professionals do when faced with a situation that must be responded to immediately. Often, principals are faced with an element of surprise which requires them to quickly reflect “...in the midst of action without interrupting it” (Schön, 1987,

principals base these habits of practice on the beliefs and values that underlie their leadership. It is these deep beliefs that guide a principal's behavior in the high-stress situations when every eye in the room is watching.

Therefore, the leader who has considered ahead of time what behaviors he or she wishes to demonstrate when strong emotions arise will have something to draw upon in that split-second moment of surprise when how the principal responds in public without preparation will either escalate or de-escalate a problem. ■

SPU's John Bond teamed up with principal Sheila Gerrish to follow up on qualitative study he conducted in 2010-11.

Common Core Mastering Internal Change

Staff acceptance of Common Core won't happen without a navel-gazing moment

By Jeff Miller

*Principal, East Valley High School
East Valley School District #361*

We all remember those breakthrough moments in our careers that caused us to change our practices and improve our professional craft. Before that breakthrough moment could occur, we had to develop a rationale for making the change in the first place.

If the reason for making a change is driven solely from extrinsic or external forces such as a new law or a new policy, our first instinct might be to question or even resist the change. If we do not understand the reason for the change it becomes difficult to break out of our comfort zones and embrace it. Extrinsic forces alone rarely create or sustain long-term change.

True systemic changes require us to develop a set of intrinsic or internal motivations to support the change. In other words, we must fully understand and believe in the rationale for supporting the proposed change.

As the Common Core State Standards descend into our schools and classrooms, a change in educational purpose and practice comes along with it. To help develop our intrinsic motivation to embrace this change, critical questions typically arise.

Here are a few of those critical questions that have come from my high school staff members:

- What are these learning standards?
- Where did they come from and who wrote them?
- Will all teachers need to embrace them, or only the teachers in certain subject areas?
- Are they valuable skills for our students to master?
- How do we roll them into our current curriculum sequence and alignment?
- How will these standards be assessed and by what measures?
- How will we communicate this change to our students, parents and community members?

Extrinsic forces alone rarely create or sustain long-term change.

In our district we have been blessed with structured time to collaborate on a regular basis. If we use this collaboration time effectively to address

these questions, will we begin to develop a common and shared vision, and develop practices to make our students

proficient in these learning standards. Through this shared vision, we can develop the intrinsic motivation to change our practices and make both teachers and students successful partners in mastery of the Common Core State Standards. ■

Finally, the big question: Who will be held accountable for student achievement around these new standards?

These are all great questions. Some are easier to answer than others. While the intended outcomes of this change seem apparent, the best critical thinkers on my staff also ask about the unintended consequences of this change.



Longtime principal Jeff Miller has been active on AWSP boards and committees since 1997. This year he is serving as AWSP president.

What's YOUR Why?

Highly effective principals prioritize kids at the top of their list

WHOLE CHILD EDUCATION

By Andre Wicks

*Assistant Principal, Shaw Middle School
Spokane PS*

When I worked with students, their families and my teaching staff this year, my mantra was abundantly clear: student learning is the priority.

I also frequently said to students, "I get you as a person. And I understand that as a middle school student there are A LOT of things that are important to you." I tell students that because it's true. As adults who work with adolescents, we must first seek to understand them and to share in making their dreams become realities.

Really knowing our students helps us prioritize the things that are most important. To a middle-schooler that might be friends, athletics, clothes and a cell phone. Lord have mercy, what would middle-schoolers do if they couldn't text? But students also must know that they are expected to learn at high levels. There is a reciprocal expectation that we as leaders provide the skills and support they need. And, that we invite students to build strong relationships so that it's possible push and stretch their capacity for learning.

Highly effective principals prioritize kids at the top of their lists. Before data, before budgets. Before all else. The most important thing is the student—each and every wonderful blessing of the future that walks our halls. This is the idea behind whole child education, that each child, in each of our schools, is healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged.

Last September in NASSP's "News Leader" publication, just prior to winning the National Principal of the

The most highly regarded, high-achieving schools focus on and honor people.

Year award, Toppenish High School Principal **Trevor Greene** was praised by Wapato High School Principal **Eric Diener**. Diener said, "Mr. Greene... sought first to understand the physical, emotional, social and cognitive developments of his students and... then built systems and implemented sustainable programs to engage and motivate them to achieve at high levels." **John Cerna**, Toppenish's superintendent, added that Greene raised the bar on expectations by creating "a school environment that is warm, inviting, safe and secure."

So, what are Greene and other principals like him doing to allow teachers to solicit so much student success regardless of circumstances and socio-economic status? The answer is in their "why." Schools that consistently see students achieving at high levels have a purpose that goes beyond assessments, data and the minutia.

If nothing else in this article strikes you, let this: The most highly regarded, high-achieving schools focus on and honor people. They have low teacher-to-student ratios, they have high percentages of students who are college and career ready, they have highly skilled and unrelenting teachers. But most importantly they focus on and honor people.

You will read it in their mission statements, you will hear it in their interactions with students, and you will see it as part of their daily habits. We, as educators, are in the people business. It just so happens that we have a common stage of teaching and learning that brings us all together. ■

INVASION OF THE



COMMON CORE

By Whitney Meissner, Ed.D.

*Principal, Chimacum Middle & High Schools
Chimacum SD*

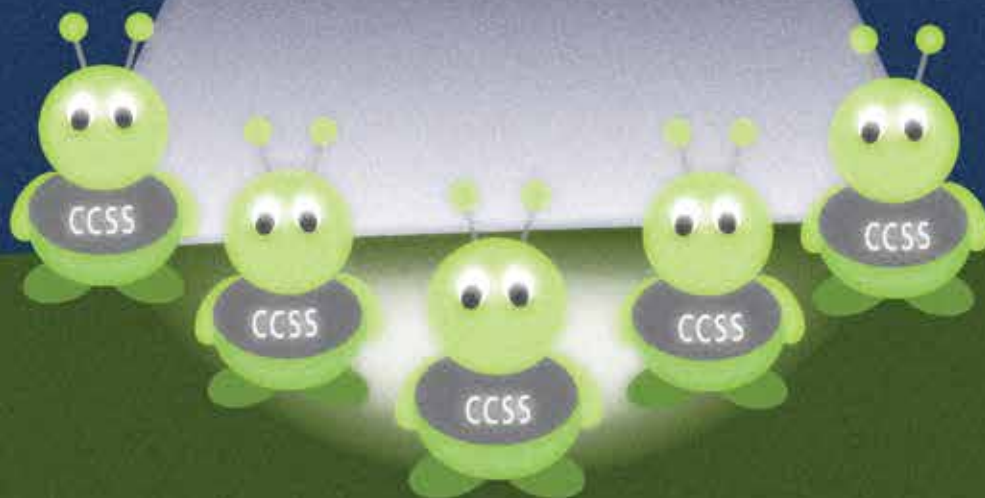


Illustration by Caroline Brumfield

When you think of an invasion, what comes to mind?

Overgrown blackberry vines? Sugar ants in your pantry?
Alien spaceships hovering overhead with bright spotlights?
Something even more deadly??

Have you ever considered that an invasion can be a good thing?

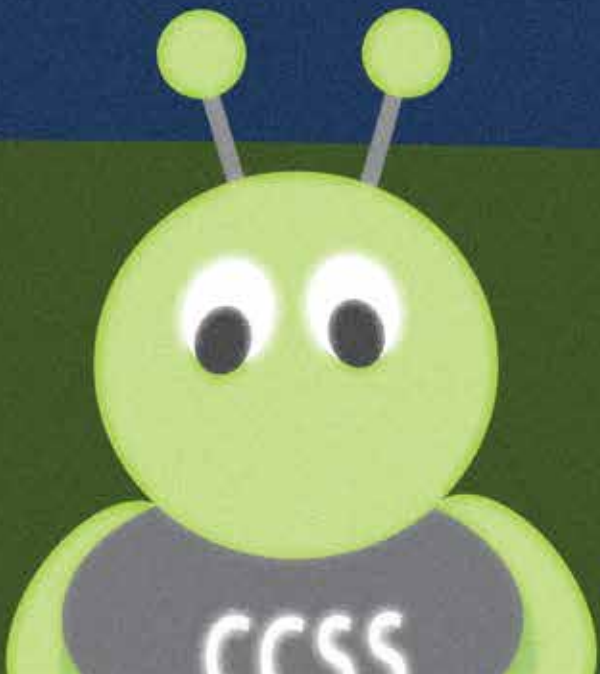
The invasion of the Common Core can certainly feel like something that is being done to us. In this age of increased accountability, public criticism, and the general sense that “public schools aren’t doing enough,” it can be easy to feel like shouting from the hilltops, “What more can I do?!”

There is another way. Instead of thinking that these things are being done “to” us, consider that raising the standards for teaching and learning is exactly the right work we should be doing. As principals, we are charged with

ensuring our students are learning every day. We also must ensure that staff are armed with the skills, knowledge and tools needed to reach every child. And, since we are a public school system, every child truly means every child.

The time has come for us to refocus our energy on the right work. We are the leaders of our schools. We must band together to prioritize the most important work: improving teaching and learning. There is a leadership challenge embedded within that mission, and that is to become both the lead learner and the head cheerleader of the initiatives. We cannot lead what we do not know, and our attitude sets the tone for implementation. We must ask ourselves, what do we believe our kids deserve?

The time has come for us, as principals, to accept the challenges with grace, style, class, and yes, enthusiasm.



Transforming Instruction for the Common Core:

It's All About Leadership

By Jim Warford

*Senior Consultant,
International Center
for Leadership in
Education/ Scholastic
Achievement Partners*

**Photos by
Ingrid Barrentine**

Why all the fuss over the Common Core State Standards? Because the new

standards—and the Smarter Balanced Assessments that will be used in Washington to measure student success on them—represent the biggest change in teaching and learning in over a generation. For Washington principals and their counterparts across the United States, successfully leading this transition may well prove to be the greatest leadership challenge of their careers.

For almost 20 years, I have closely listened to and worked with principals and know just how much the role has really changed. The instructional shifts required by the Common Core and new assessments will dramatically illustrate this change in leadership responsibilities of, and the emphasis on, principals.

For the past three years, my colleagues at the International Center for Leadership in Education and I have been helping school leaders across the country prepare for the Common Core. From our perspective, no group of principals in the nation has been reflecting more deeply on this challenge than those in Yakima, where every school leader is moving forward on a strategic set of Common Core goals and priorities.

Erik Swanson, Ph.D. principal of Yakima's McKinley Elementary School, has come to know firsthand the important role of leadership. "Building leadership capacity by empowering staff is a critical component for transitioning to the Common Core... and for ensuring sustained improvement," he said.

The Common Core will be delivered best by empowering your staff. Principals will need to expand their entire repertoire of leadership skills to include goal focus, adaptability, developing distributive leadership and leadership teams, communicating

to internal and external audiences, building community engagement, and implementing effective instructional leadership strategies and practices.

The Common Core State Standards mark a new direction for K-12 education. Embedded in the Common Core is a different approach to academics, one that places greater emphasis on communication skills, informational reading and writing, and interpreting

Essentially, the Common Core State Standards reflect the belief that students need a rigorous and relevant education that will make them both college ready and career ready.

dense text, as well as on math skills related to modeling and reasoning—all more applied and workplace-related than previous standards. Essentially, the Common Core State Standards reflect the belief that students need a rigorous and relevant education that will make them both college ready and career ready.

Preparing for the new assessments necessitates a fundamental shift in instruction. The assessments will be performance-based, which means students will need to demonstrate the ability to think in complex ways and apply their skills and knowledge when confronted with complicated problems. Preparing students for success on these more complex assessments requires providing instruction that is more rigorous and more relevant.

DSEI: a systems approach

Schools I have worked with on transitioning to the Common Core are using a systems-based approach through the Daggett System for Effective Instruction (DSEI). The DSEI, created by the International Center for Leadership in Education, is a way to transform traditional systems, approaches and schools into effective and efficient systems that more fully prepare all

students for the challenges of our 21st century global economy and technological society.

An organization-wide commitment to maximize achievement for every student is at the heart of the DSEI. Teachers are the most powerful influence on instruction; therefore, the entire system needs to be focused on making teachers effective. The DSEI supports a coherent focus across an

entire education system: organizational leadership, instructional leadership, and teaching.

Organizational leadership

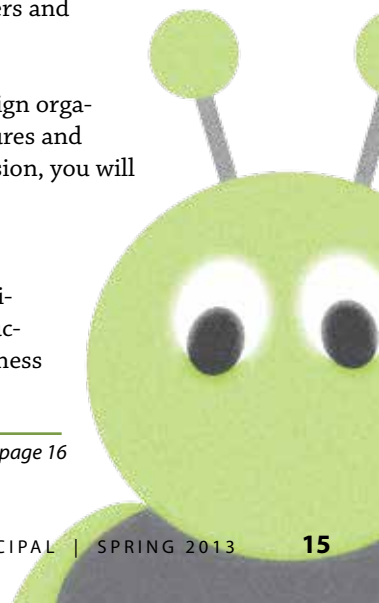
Think of organizational leadership as a function, not just a person. It involves a commitment to create the environment in which learning is optimized and to align the school's organizational systems to support student achievement.

One of your primary tasks as principal is to establish a culture of high expectations. Meet with your staff and community to create a shared vision—a common definition of student success—not only as scholars but also as future workers, citizens, consumers and parents.

As you work to align organizational structures and systems to the vision, you will need to:

- Decide which external impediments to instructional effectiveness can be changed

Continued on page 16



or compensated for and which are beyond your control

- Identify the factors that make instruction most effective and efficient.

Leadership does not reside in a single position, but reflects the attributes, skills, and attitudes of your many dedicated staff members. Without the passionate people to initiate and support change, any reform effort will quickly lose momentum. The DSEI advocates building leadership capacity through an empowerment model by enhancing existing leaders' skills and identifying and cultivating emerging leaders. Doing so broadens the leadership capacity of the organization immediately and paves the way for continuous development of new leaders.

Adopt a talent management system for recruitment, retention, development, and evaluation of teachers. Focus on instructional effectiveness, and make sure everyone is aligned horizontally and vertically to support student achievement.

Leadership does not reside in a single position, but reflects the attributes, skills, and attitudes of your many dedicated staff members.

Finally, organizational leadership needs to ensure that a data system is used to inform and enhance instructional effectiveness. This includes building "data literacy" among all stakeholders and emphasizing the importance of data-driven decision making.

Instructional leadership

Instructional leadership focuses directly on supporting teachers. The DSEI concentrates on several overarching functions of instructional leadership, which can be provided by a variety of people.

The first task is to reinforce the vision set forth by organizational leadership and to corroborate the urgent need to change teaching and learning in order to improve student achievement. Instructional leaders need to see themselves as the key change agents in raising expectations and results.

Instructional leaders need to align curriculum to standards and prepare teachers for the new types of instruction and formative assessment that are associated with the Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Assessments.

Instructional leadership must champion the integration and application of Common Core literacy and math standards across all grades and all curriculums. The English language arts standards place special emphasis on text complexity and practical applications of literacy. The Standards of Mathematical Practice focus on problem solving, reasoning and proof, and "strands of mathematical proficiency" include adaptive reasoning, strategic competence, conceptual understanding, and procedural fluency.

Instructional leaders help teachers understand student data and how to apply it to instruction and interventions. To meet the needs of diverse learners, teachers must use this data to measure student growth and to inform and differentiate instruction.



ABOVE: Students use the library computers at Davis High School in Yakima.

PREVIOUS: Jim Warford (pictured) consults on Common Core issues with Washougal High School Principal Aaron Hanson in Vancouver.

Instructional leaders must provide opportunities for focused professional collaboration and growth. Teachers will need time to develop new skills for effective instruction and a place to practice them. They may benefit from modeling of best practices and time for reflection with peers in order to make these practices part of their repertoire.

Teaching

If organizational leadership does its job to establish an overarching vision, align systems, deal with obstacles, and build leadership capacity; and if instructional leadership ensures that tools, data, and assistance are available to teachers; then the vanguard of instructional effectiveness—teaching—will be well supported in addressing the daunting challenges of the classroom. The DSEI emphasizes the following functions under teaching:

Embrace rigorous and relevant expectations for all students. Teachers must embrace the organizational vision that all students can and will learn, and strive to help every student reach his or her fullest potential. This is the attitude that effective teachers bring to class every day. Embracing high expectations is an offshoot of building strong relationships with students. Positive, trusting relationships increase students' engagement in school and commitment to their own learning.

Possess depth of content knowledge and make it relevant to students. Teachers must have strong content expertise in their subjects and be able to make connections, show relevance, nurture engagement, and embed understanding. The Common Core and Next Generation Assessments require this rigorous and relevant approach.

Create and implement an effective learning environment that is engaging and aligned to learner needs. Teachers need to understand that today's students are wired differently: they take connectivity and instant access to information for granted. These multi-



taskers would rather "do to learn" than "learn to do." The abundance of discoveries in brain research can help teachers understand the differences among learners.

Use research-based strategies, technology and best practices. Teaching students with diverse backgrounds, learning styles and ability levels requires teachers to be competent in using a variety of instructional approaches. Application-based instruction is a means of raising student achievement. Technology offers

students a chance to delve more deeply and links curriculum with real-world experiences.

Use assessment and data to guide and scaffold instruction. Teachers should always ask themselves: "Did they ALL get it? How do I know they got it, and how do I help those students who didn't?" Formative assessment, used regularly by teachers and students during instruction, provides feedback to shape and inform instruction.

Continued on page 18

Increasing rigor and relevance

An important tool I recommend to help teachers ensure that their instructional practice is appropriately rigorous and requires the application of knowledge to real-world situations is the Rigor/Relevance Framework®. Designed by the International Center for Leadership in Education, many schools and teachers use the framework to increase the level of academic rigor and make classroom instruction more relevant and engaging for students. The framework has proved to increase the effectiveness of learning for all students by guiding curriculum, instruction and assessment. The Rigor/Relevance Framework is based on traditional elements of education, yet encourages movement from acquisition of knowledge to application of knowledge and can bridge the shift to the expectations set forth by Common Core State Standards and Next Generation Assessments.

What have we learned?

For almost a year now, Yakima leaders at every level have been deeply engaged in applying these concepts throughout the district. I have thoroughly enjoyed sharing this work and reflection with them. So, what have we learned?

I asked Dr. Swanson that question and he shared the results he's been seeing at McKinley Elementary. "Relevance drives higher engagement, which increases rigor. I'm seeing veteran teachers, who were skeptical at first, embrace the Common Core training and see better results.

Before when they'd teach a concept, about half the students would get it. Using these new strategies, almost all get it!"

You see, the Common Core is not only about the students learning. In Yakima, we're ALL learning—together. And having some fun along the way.

You see, the Common Core is not only about the students learning. In Yakima, we're ALL learning—together. And having some fun along the way.

As **Alan Matsumoto**, principal of Garfield Elementary School, said in his best Buzz Lightyear voice, "To infinity and beyond!"

In April and May, AWSP—in partnership with OSPI and Scholastic Achievement Partners—hosted a series of five workshops throughout Washington to share what we've learned and to help you prepare for the Common Core. More training is on the way. ■

About Scholastic Achievement Partners

Scholastic Achievement Partners brings together the expertise of Scholastic, Math Solutions, and the International Center for Leadership in Education to provide unmatched support to districts, schools and teachers in all 50 states. Learn more at www.scholasticachievementpartners.com

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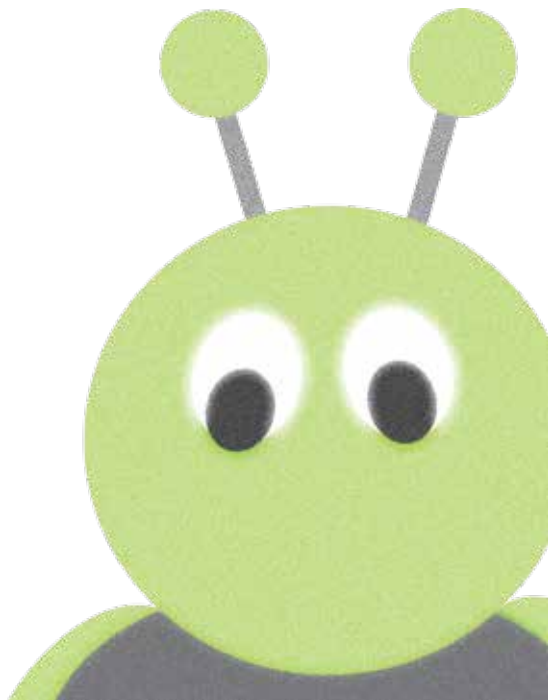

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INGRID BARENTINE

Davis High School

Ben Ramirez, Principal

What has been your biggest challenge?

Time. Time is needed to coordinate training and create essential conversation about the new learning. Teachers and administrators need to collaborate about lesson design, student engagement, and the use of technology in the classroom.

Have you had any major victories?

There have been major victories that will help our school move forward in the transition to Common Core. I'm really happy with the advanced training of key leaders in the building. One group has had more advanced training and is currently involved in observation and reflection of current school practices. Another group has three department chairs who have brought together their departments and worked on common strategies that focus on student learning and engagement.

What are you doing now that's working?

Having an early start has allowed us to move slowly and deliberately. The entire staff has had training on the standards. We have then worked with small groups as they are ready to offer more advanced training and opportu-

nities to focus on lessons, vocabulary, observations and/or reflection on their work. Staff will be working with our coaches to redesign lessons and the delivery of instruction to reflect the new standards.

Would you share some of your future plans?

As we continue to train staff in the Common Core, we have unrolled a plan to allow teachers opportunities to observe each other's classrooms to provide each other feedback and have conversations about rigor, relevance and learner engagement. We have also unveiled the Yakima School District's five instructional strategies (one per month) to enhance classroom instruction. Our expectation is that staff attempts each new strategy. We will conduct surveys and observations to gather information and feedback to direct future professional conversation.



INGRID BARENTINE

Gilbert Elementary School

Anne Berg, Principal

What has been your biggest challenge?

Ramping up teacher and parent expectations is not something that can be done swiftly yet it needs to happen quickly. We are paying careful attention to the new standards for

instruction and are educating parents along the way.

Have you had any victories?

We are serious about looking at student work this year. This comes from the need to be ready for the increasing rigor in Common Core. Our largest victory has been the staff realizing they have the ability to impact the scores through collaboration. That has been exciting.

What are you doing now that's working?

Gilbert staff have been involved in a great deal of professional development this year. In an effort to better prepare our students, our teachers are becoming better prepared to instruct them successfully. We have a large ELL population and a high rate of students in poverty. Our teachers are being GLAD trained. This Guided Language Acquisition program has energized our teachers and in turn has increased excitement and engagement with our students. It digs deeper and instruction is more rigorous and more relevant.

Our instructional facilitator has worked with third, fourth and fifth grade level teams specifically with the pictorial input from the GLAD strategy in the reading curriculum. The stories in our anthologies are not stories that our students relate well to. The vocabulary used in many of the stories is foreign to our population and the background knowledge necessary to quickly comprehend the main points is something many do not have. The pictorial input strategy builds background knowledge and vocabulary at the beginning of each selection, and remains hanging in the classroom as a resource throughout the theme. This takes a good deal more time to plan and prepare for than simply using the teacher guide and workbooks, but the teams are committed to doing this regularly. Student are an active

Continued on page 20

Continued from page 19

participant in this process and we have seen engagement increase as the work becomes relevant and rigorous for them.

A second significant piece of preparing our students has been use of Math Benchmark Assessments (MBA). These assessments have given the staff a diagnostic tool that allows our teachers to identify the holes that their students have in math. The assessments have also helped teachers to understand misconceptions students may have about a particular math operation. Data dives after each MBA allow grade-level teams to evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of our program and their own instruction. MBA data is presented in terms of the Washington state standards and Common Core. Our staff is becoming more and more familiar with Common Core and are now cognizant of the stretching we must do.

Would you share some of your future plans?

We have trained teachers in several specific strategies that increase students' interaction with their peers and their instructor. Specifically they have been trained in and are using the following strategies: 10-2/5-2; Think, write, pair, share; Reflective writing; and an explicit vocabulary strategy (the Frayer model).

Most of our teachers have chosen to try out "gold seal lessons" from Next Navigator. These samples of quadrant D lessons have inspired the staff and energized the students. This past week I had the chance to spend time in a fifth grade classroom in its math block. The teacher used three of the four strategies listed above. She was very enthusiastic about the lesson because of the ongoing interaction and academic challenge it was providing her students. There was no chance to "opt out" as a student.

Specifically, the instructional target was solving a three-step problem using addition, subtraction, multiplication and division of decimals. Students needed to determine how much of a particular item, such as Cheez-Its or Jolly Ranchers, they needed to purchase. They were charged with calculating the amount in the containers, determining cost per serving, and debating how much they should purchase. The teacher was guiding and in close proximity but student discussions drove the work. They were not doing workbook pages, alone at their desks. They were interacting, thinking and engaged in solutions to this very relevant math problem and loving it!

Our students are "sitting and getting" less and less. Driving this change is the move to Common Core. Teachers have found that the students actually like the opportunity to think more deeply and share their thoughts. Our students are animated and we see their enthusiasm.

providing time for our teachers to deeply understand components of the Common Core State Standards and align their content to the Common Core expectations and Student Critical Attributes. Our professional development plan includes four days of Next Network/Next Navigator training and time to work collaboratively with colleagues developing lesson plans and performance tasks using these new resources.

Have you had any victories?

Our biggest victory so far has been creating a collaborative environment which allows us to work and learn together in our Common Core journey. Teachers have appreciated the time to work and come loaded down with their curriculum materials ready to dig in and collaborate. They feel empowered to go beyond the curriculum guide and create lessons that are more relevant and also challenge student thinking with performance tasks.

What are you doing now that's working?

Our teaching staff has made a commitment to the quarterly professional development days which allows us to apply the Common Core Rigor/Relevant Framework to our lesson planning. Here's what one of our math teachers, **Lianna Sackmann**, told me about this training:

"The pull-out PD days

we've had with our content teams through the school year regarding CCSS have been invaluable. We've been given the opportunity to examine more closely our specific grade level standards with Common Core, brainstorm ways to adapt our current curriculum, and plan for implementation of the Common Core. I have left our PD days with not only a better



INGRID BARRENTINE

Lewis & Clark Middle School

Victor Nourani, Principal

What has been your biggest challenge?

Our biggest challenge in transitioning to the Common Core has been

understanding of what my specific Common Core standards are, but also specific plans and resources for adapting my current teaching practices and curriculum to meet the rigor and relevance required by Common Core.”

In addition, teachers are learning how to use the Student Critical Attributes as a rubric in their design of Performance Tasks. They have been able to familiarize themselves with many new resources and increase their expertise using them to collaborate and create lessons. The planning has benefited the coordination and consistency of instructional strategies across classrooms, such as Cornell notes.

Would you share some of your future plans?

To help in our preparation for the Common Core, teachers are adding new tools and resources such as Next Network and Next Navigator/Gold Seal Lessons, and sample questions from the Smarter Balanced website. Also, the five Yakima School District Instructional Strategies are part of our building-wide focus to improve instruction and student engagement.

I am very proud of our teaching team for their collaboration and commitment to do what is best for students and to prepare them for academic success. They have taken advantage of time provided for their professional development to examine Common Core in depth. ■



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Common
Core
and

Special Education

By Patricia Moncure Thomas

*Principal, Browns Point Elementary School
Tacoma PS*

Photos by Chris Tumbusch



The new state standards will help teachers make curricular information and skills accessible to their students with disabilities

With the adoption of Common Core State Standards in Washington, all students are expected to excel and make academic growth. That includes students who receive special education services with Individualized Educational Plans (IEP). IEPs are designed to help special education students meet the same grade-level standards as the general education student.

Educators have been dealing with IEPs for more than a decade and still they can be seen as a moving target. The new state standards offer a common ground for helping students with IEPs to work on the same grade-level academic standards as general education students. The target is the same for all.

The demands on special education teachers include teaching across grade levels with a fluid understanding of how to make curricular information and skills accessible to their students with disabilities. The new Common Core State Standards provide a detailed road map as the skills build from one grade level to the next.

Strategies that work for special education teachers are abundant. A few include:

- Alignment of IEP goals with general education curriculum as the primary source of academic content for all students.
- A deep knowledge of Common Core at grade level(s) as needed by their students.
- Design Common Core-based lessons using present level of performance of SPED students.

- Break the standards into component and kid-friendly parts or sub-skills.
- Create goal(s) for students that are measurable, with objectives both long- and short-term.
- Monitor, monitor
- Celebrate success!

I have been the principal at Browns

parents/guardians and myself. We have two wonderful certificated special education teachers who oversee and work seamlessly with their support staff as well as with all general education teachers. We function as a team.

We are excited to integrate Common Core State Standards into the work we're doing at Browns Point. The standards provide an excellent foundation for the success of every student at his

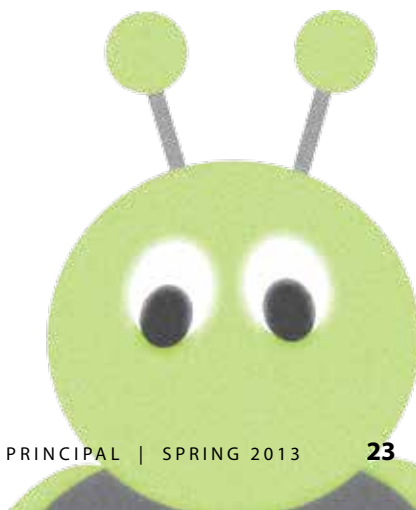


Principal Patricia Moncure Thomas observes a special education classroom at Browns Point Elementary School.

Point Elementary School in Tacoma for the past 12 years. Our school believes in academic inclusion, and the majority of our SPED students are in general education classrooms with their peers. Our special education department includes a K-5 Adjustment Classroom, and a combined K-5 Therapeutic Learning Center and Learning Resources Center that address a wide range of cognitive and clinical needs, especially for those students who are unable to join general education classrooms.

To keep it all running smoothly, there is ongoing communication between SPED, general education teachers,

or her present levels of performance. In addition, they provide clear expectations for all students, whether they are general education or SPED. ■



Common Core and English Language Learners

By Rebekah Kim

*Principal, Midway Elementary School
Highline SD*

Photo by Chris Tumbusch



Principal Rebekah Kim helps a student in the before-school Imagine Learning English class at Midway Elementary in Burien.

Common Core supports this innovative immersion program at Midway Elementary in the Highline School District

Thirty seven percent of Midway's 580 students qualify for English Language Learner (ELL) services. In our effort to find what works best for our ELL learners, we have found success in an innovative blended learning program we call Imagine Learning English. This program complements the current ELL support for students that includes GLAD strategies and bilingual tutors in math and literacy.

Imagine Learning English is a daily opportunity for students who need additional intervention, support and engagement. Every day, students are provided before-school seat time with a technological immersion in English and literacy skills. The interactive, computer-based program engages students through colorful graphics, stories and songs. It can be used with English, Spanish and other languages.

There are many shifts taking place with the new Common Core Standards that relate to our work in ELL. For example, each grade level will require growth in accessing and understanding more complex texts to prepare them for college. We are constantly thinking of ways we can differentiate and make the learning experience targeted and meaningful for our students. Using a blended program like Imagine Learning English will help to increase the basic literacy skills that will help to build a foundation for students to progress with the new state standards.

During a recent event we call "Midway Mustang Mornings," parents gathered in the school library for coffee, donuts and conversation with our leadership staff. We took them on a test drive of Imagine Learning English. We used translators as many of our parents do not speak English or are not comfort-

able conversing in English. Feedback was positive. One parent said, "It is helpful. I like it. Parents need technology classes so we can help the students. Thank you for doing this."

The hands-on session with parents gave staff perspective on how we can extend this learning at home. We will be inviting parents once a week to join their students and receive technology training.

The interactive, computer-based program engages students through colorful graphics, stories and songs. It can be used with English, Spanish and other languages.

We are excited to complete our implementation of Imagine Learning English and analyze the results. We anticipate that this expanded program will dramatically impact our students' language development and literacy skills. This will be measured by formative assessments such as the Reading Benchmark Assessment and progress of Fountas and Pinnell comprehension levels. We are currently working with families to set up and pilot the program at home.

Other strategies around ELL at Midway include:

- **Book study for all staff.** "The Pedagogy of Confidence" by Yvette Jackson.
- **Instructional walk.** Leadership team staff took instructional walks to discover trends in ELL. We identified a need to deepen engagement of student discourse to ensure all students could access content and participate more regularly.

- **Half-day follow-up workshop.**

We then held a grade-level studio where teachers spent a half-day with our instructional facilitator and support team planning a lesson, setting up partnerships and learning strategies to engage all learners in a deeper dialogue around learning targets. The training was so successful we extended it to all staff.

In my classroom observations, I'm already seeing these practices being refined and implemented. ■



Implementing Common Core

Success AT THE Core
How Teams and Teachers Transform Instruction

By Ailene Baxter

Principal, Ferrucci Junior High School
Puyallup SD

Using resources from *Success at the Core*, our instructional leadership teams are key to a successful implementation of the new state standards

My colleagues and I have been discussing the Common Core State Standards. (I imagine you have, too!) Specifically, our understanding of the standards, the implementation timelines, and the leadership challenges we anticipate.

regarding school improvement. As we transition to the Common Core, we need to develop a common vision for implementing the standards and for how they will play out in our curriculum. These same leadership teams will also help foster the classroom-based instructional improvements necessary to help students meet the new standards.

ment module, “Implementing New Programs,” as a way to get their heads around the various components of implementing any new initiative (including the Common Core).

As team conversations turn to curriculum, I anticipate that *SaC*’s “Aligning Curriculum” module will be helpful as well. In particular, the module’s video

Key questions for me include:

- How do I break down the standards so my staff can clearly understand them?
- How is our established curriculum aligned with Common Core?
- What current instructional practices align with the new expectations?
- How do I best support my teachers in the implementation?
- Is this a new name for the same thing, and if so, why am I stressing?

As principal, I head our school’s instructional leadership team. I see these teams as the key to implementing the Common Core. At my school, leadership teams help to get the entire staff on the same page

Lately, I’ve used *Success at the Core* for helping our leadership teams build a schoolwide plan for Common Core.

Supporting leadership teams is essential to my role as a learning-focused leader. I’ve found *Success at the Core (SaC)* to be a valuable resource. *SaC* is a free, web-based professional development toolkit for educators that was developed and piloted in Washington state.

Lately, I’ve used *SaC* to help our leadership teams build a schoolwide plan for implementing the Common Core. I’ve encouraged our teams to explore *SaC*’s Leadership Develop-

“Horizontal and Vertical Curriculum Alignment” can help department and grade-level teams develop a common understanding of what an aligned curriculum means, how it benefits students, and how it can be developed in connection to Common Core.

We also are promoting instructional strategies aligned with the Common Core. Teacher teams are exploring and implementing various new instructional practices. In math, for example,

teachers have identified persistence and perseverance in using mathematical discourse as a key practice they want to foster. To help them visualize what this practice looks like, they have viewed two *SaC* Teacher Development videos: "Facilitating Academic Discourse" and "Analyzing Data in Small Groups." In language arts, teachers are exploring *SaC*'s "Building Content Vocabulary" and "Making Inferences" strategies to help them build the instructional competencies needed for Common Core-aligned teaching.

BB King once mused, "The beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you." I'm excited to continue learning and, with my staff discover how we can implement the Common Core in such a way that student engagement and achievement continues to grow. And I'm thankful that *Success at the Core*, a free resource, can help us with this important work.

Learn more at
www.successatthecore.com ■

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State Assessments and the Common Core

By Robin G. Munson, Ph.D.

Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Student Information

Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

With the implementation of Common Core, students must master grade-level content standards in English Language Arts and Mathematics to ensure they leave high school ready for the college or career of their choice. To know if students are making the progress needed to master these standards, state assessments will change.

Because each state has had its own content standards, the No Child Left Behind Act (2002) left each one to determine which assessments it would pursue for federal accountability. States have long complained that comparing performance on standardized tests was not reasonable given different content standards, test designs, and test-rigor across states.

Smarter Balanced

In October 2010, the U.S. Department of Education tasked two multi-state consortia with the design and development of Common Core assessments. One is called the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium (Smarter Balanced), and the other is called the Partnership for Assessment of Readiness for College and Careers (PARCC).

Both consortia were granted money for four years to do the following:

- Develop more rigorous tests measuring student progress toward “college and career readiness”
- Have common, comparable scores across member states, and across consortia
- Provide achievement and growth information to help make better educational decisions and professional development opportunities
- Assess all students, except those with “significant cognitive disabilities”
- Administer online, with timely results
- Use multiple measures
- Be operational in 2014-15 school year

Smarter Balanced has 24 states participating, PARCC has 22 states and the Virgin Islands. A few states are not part of either consortium (they’ll be developing their own assessments) and a few are part of both consortia.

Participation in a consortium does not necessarily mean that a state must adopt that consortium’s tests when all is said and done, but the likelihood is great that states will stick with that choice given that they are involved along the way in shaping the tests, operational procedures, reporting, and score interpretation.

Because Washington is actively engaged in Smarter Balanced, the

rest of this article presumes that this test will be the Common Core assessment that the Legislature will choose, though the possibility exists that PARCC assessments will be adopted instead.

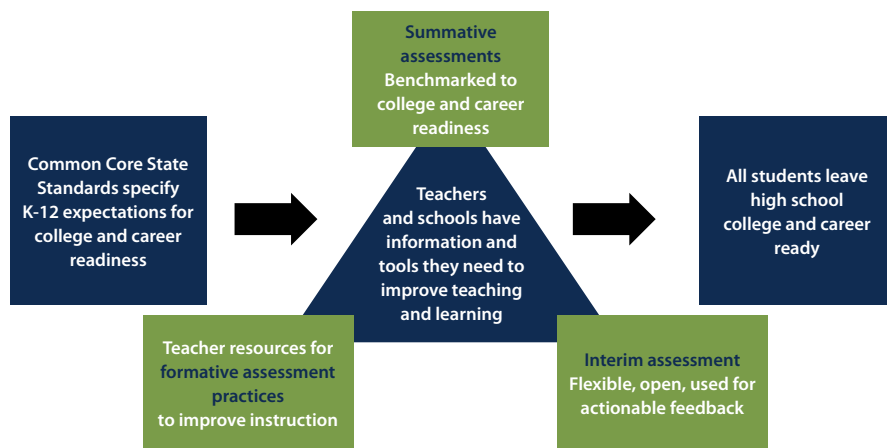
Summative and interim assessments

The Smarter Balanced design integrates summative and interim assessments with formative tools that will give teachers what they need to modify instruction. This is what is meant by a balanced assessment system.

Smarter Balanced assessments will be administered on computers. They will use computer adaptive testing for short-answer and multiple-choice items, and incorporate longer performance tasks.

The **summative assessment** will be administered during the last 12 weeks of school and will:

- Accurately describe both student achievement and growth of student learning as part of program evaluation and school, district and state accountability systems
- Provide valid, reliable and fair measures of student progress toward, and attainment of knowledge and skills required to be college and career ready



- Capitalize on the strengths of computer adaptive testing (efficient and precise measurement across the full range of achievement and quick turnaround of results).

The optional **interim assessments** can be administered at locally determined intervals. These assessments will provide actionable information about student progress throughout the year. Like the summative assessment, the interim assessments will be computer adaptive and include performance tasks. The interim assessments will:

- Help teachers, students, and parents understand whether students are on track, and identify strengths and limitations in relation to the Common Core State Standards;
- Be fully accessible for instruction and professional development (non-secure); and
- Support the development of state end-of-course tests.

Formative assessment practices and strategies will be provided through a digital library of professional development materials, resources and tools aligned to Common Core State and Smarter Balanced assessment targets. Research-based instructional tools will be available on-demand to help teachers address learning challenges and differentiate instruction. The digital library will include professional

development materials related to all components of the assessment system, such as scoring rubrics for performance tasks.

What will the new assessments mean for Washington?

Washington will likely adopt the new Smarter Balanced assessments in ELA and Mathematics as accountability tests in Grades 3-8 and 11. The 11th grade Smarter Balanced assessment will be a significant change because, up to now, Washington has used tests in 10th grade for accountability.

Given that the assessments will be designed to assess college and career readiness, rather than minimum high school competency, lower pass rates are anticipated. In a not-yet-published survey of states by the Center on Education Policy (CEP), most states indicated they anticipate the new Common Core tests to be more rigorous than the tests currently used for accountability and exit exams. Michigan, for instance, recently revised its cut scores to be more aligned with college and career readiness, and predicted a resulting pass rate drop from 52 percent to 28 percent on its 11th grade math test, with even larger drops in lower grade levels.

Washington also will need to decide what tests to use for assessment graduation requirements. The 2013 Legisla-

ture will need to decide if the high school graduation requirement for passing assessments will use the 11th grade Smarter Balanced test. Disadvantages of that plan include limited time for remediation and retakes should students not meet standard, and the higher standard for passing the test (i.e., college and career ready).

Options that can be considered include continuing the current HSPE and EOCs in 10th grade or relying on Smarter Balanced to provide a variation of the 11th grade summative test that can be taken in 10th grade. Either option would allow time for remediation should the student not meet standard in 10th grade, and provide sufficient time for retakes and/or use of alternatives.

How is Washington making the transition to Common Core assessment?

Schools and school districts that have participated in online testing on our current state assessments in Grades 3-8 have a head start on the transition to Common Core assessments. In addition, the state is involving as many teachers as possible in Smarter Balanced development activities, including providing feedback on item specifications, item writing and review, developing accommodations, etc.

More than 200 schools participated in pilot testing this spring. More extensive field testing is slated for 2013-14.

For more information, visit www.SmarterBalanced.org, or contact Robin Munson, Washington's Smarter Balanced state lead at robin.munson@k12.wa.us. ■

Don't miss our profile of **Joe Willhoft**, the executive director of Smarter Balanced, pg. 44.



Kelly Aramaki | *Beacon Hill International School*

Educating Elementary Students as **World Citizens**

By Laurel Bennett

Contributing Writer

Photo by Chris Tumbusch

It's absolutely fitting that the principalship Kelly Aramaki held just before his current post at Beacon Hill International School was at John Stanford International School. Stanford, the former Seattle Public Schools superintendent who died in 1998, left a legacy of educating even our youngest students with a world view in mind—a position that Aramaki proudly upholds in his work every day at Beacon Hill.

"John Stanford had a dream for public schooling in Seattle to be a world-class education system, where we prepare students for public citizenship and help them to be fluent in culture and language as well as in academics," Aramaki said. "I feel lucky to be part of that dream."

Aramaki has been principal at Beacon Hill since 2011. He presides over a Title 1 language-immersion interna-

tional school that has more than 86 percent students of color and where more than 32 percent speak English as their second language. More than two-thirds of the students are eligible for free or reduced lunch programs. And many families are new to the United States, coming from such countries as Vietnam, China, Laos, Mexico, Guatemala and Somalia.

The diverse cultural and international backgrounds already in the student population at Beacon Hill might seem to dovetail perfectly with the school's practice of language immersion, in which children are taught only in Spanish or Mandarin for fully half the school day. But with a third of Beacon Hill students speaking English as a second language, how much sense does it make to introduce yet a third language for such a large portion of their learning?

To hear Aramaki tell it, it makes perfect sense.

"For instance, all our third graders' math and science instruction is deliv-

"Giving kids more opportunity to learn like this mean they are double-dosed in whatever area they're struggling in, which gives them a huge boost in confidence and achievement," he explained. "We're also learning how much the parents really want their children to succeed and how interested they are in supporting their kids."

What makes a good principal?

While Aramaki is likely as fervent as Stanford was in supporting an international education, he feels just as strongly about what makes for a successful principal.

"As a principal, who you hire is one of the most important jobs you have.

Giving kids more opportunity to learn (means) they are double-dosed in whatever area they're struggling in, which gives them a huge boost in confidence and achievement.

ered in Mandarin, and in testing this year, all 25 students passed the math portion, although none of them is a native Mandarin speaker. That tells me we highly underestimate kids' ability to learn," Aramaki said.

And if students have trouble academically, Aramaki said the solution at Beacon Hill is to provide extra support and more practice, not to scale back.

"Traditionally when students have struggled, schools have opted for remedial work, where kids are pulled out of the mainstream classes. But this isn't successful and it gets them even farther away from we're trying to teach," he explained.

Instead, Aramaki and his team provide such efforts as Latino Academy, in which Latino students and their parents meet before school three times a week for extra instruction, strengthening both student academics and parental involvement.

You need to hire people who have a common mission. They need to be excellent at what they do, but be filled with grace and be collaborative," he said. "When I hire, I look for all these things."

He says he also looks for people who themselves are learners, people whose base operating level is already very good, but who "strive for greatness" and always look for a better practice.

"If you have an instructor who's not willing to learn and be part of the team, it impacts the students. Understanding language development and the impact on academics is critically important," Aramaki said.

"And I do look for people who have skills in serving our population," he continued. "Beacon Hill is the third-largest ESL school in Seattle, and the people I choose to work here have to believe that ESL students are just as capable as English-first kids."

Aramaki began his career as a teacher between 1999 and 2002 at Newport Heights Elementary School in Bellevue. He then became principal at Maywood Hill Elementary School in Bothell, serving from 2003 to 2007. In 2007, he took the principalship at John Stanford International School in Seattle, leaving in 2011 to join the staff at Beacon Hill.

He earned a master of teaching degree from the Teachers College at Columbia University in New York, and a bachelor of science degree in zoology from the University of Washington. He has his principal credential through the UW's Danforth Educational Leadership program. In 2010 he earned the prestigious Milken Family Foundation Award.

About the state principal of the year award

Aramaki was named the 2013 Washington State Elementary School Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington, a governing board of AWSP. Aramaki was one of three finalists chosen from a field of 18 statewide nominees.

National honors

Aramaki will be honored this fall in Washington, D.C., as part of the National Distinguished Principal of the Year program, which is sponsored by the National Association of Elementary School Principals in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education and VALIC. While there is no national winner at the elementary level, all state winners participate in a series of events and activities over the course of two days, culminating in a formal awards banquet. ■



Heather Renner | *Morris E. Ford Middle School*

Moving Forward,

No Matter Where You Start

By Laurel Bennett

Contributing Writer

Photo by Chris Tumbusch

When leaders go about choosing members to serve on their team, some will pick those whose views mirror their own. But Heather Renner has made a conscious effort to do exactly the opposite.

“People often want those they work with to be like-minded, but I’ve always found it very important to surround myself with different-minded people who can complement me and have

strengths where I may have weaknesses. It just makes us a more well-rounded team,” said Renner, principal of Morris E. Ford Middle School, located in Midland, a small community near Puyallup.

“I was a high school coach for years, and I was always open to other coaches’ ideas and ways. It’s the same now that I’m a principal: students have different learning styles, and

one person’s way of teaching may get across better than another’s,” she explained.

Renner came to Ford Middle School as a teacher in 2001. She was promoted to dean of students in 2004 and to assistant principal in 2006. She has been in the role of principal since 2010.

“I think the reason Ford is different from other schools is that my staff

comes in with the attitude that all students can learn and that we can move them forward, regardless of where they're starting from. And every student here knows they have adults on campus who push them and encourage them and believe in them," she said.

From good to great

Renner is generally known for taking a solidly good school into the "great" category. Under her leadership, the school has risen the past three years in the State Board of Education Achievement Index from "good" to "very good" to its current "exemplary" rating.

Her dedication to rigorous and collaborative instruction has resulted in a school with a majority of students achieving above the state average on all subjects and at all grades, this

Community is everything

Renner is also fiercely committed to the community. The school hosts a monthly family night and maintains close relationships with the families of the 900 students at the school. Staged in carnival-style, with booths featuring students' work, teachers and demonstrations—and food!—the events have drawn hundreds at a time.

And thanks to a grant, the school presented the musical "Annie" last year. Asking for donations at admission, they received enough money to fund the current year's effort, "Into the Woods," complete with full costumes and scenery.

In addition, Renner oversaw a five-year federal grant that offered organized after-school activities, meals and academic support. When that

"In our after-school program, we want to show our students what's out there in the world, and teach them that no matter where they come from, they can always better their own lives," she explained.

Renner, whose father was a junior high teacher and whose mother worked her way up through the ranks of a bank to attain VP status, has clearly made the best of her background, balancing a love of education with a savvy for organization and leadership.

Renner earned a master of education from City University and a bachelor of arts in education from Western Washington University. She has her principal credential from the University of Washington-Tacoma.

About the state principal of the year award

Renner was named the 2013 Washington State Middle Level Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals, a governing board of AWSPP. She was one of five finalists chosen from a field of 10 statewide nominees.

National honors

Renner is now eligible for the 2013 National Principal of the Year award. The program, sponsored by MetLife and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. From the state winners, six finalists (three middle level, three high school) will compete for the award in Washington, D.C., later this year. ■

The school hosts a monthly family night and maintains close relationships with the families of the 900 students at the school.

despite 60 percent of students on free and reduced lunch. She has increased access to technology for all students in all subjects, has established 11 robust Professional Learning Communities that meet daily, and makes sure that there are ample professional development opportunities for staff.

Ford, which is in the Franklin Pierce School District, also maintains an active Response to Intervention (RTI) team. The team meets weekly to identify tier two and three students who struggle with issues of achievement, attendance, behavior and social/emotional health issues. Renner's efforts with RTI have helped Ford reduce by a third the number of students who are absent from school a significant number of days and reduced the number of suspensions by 30 percent.

grant expired last summer, she sought local funding and has put in place a successful program through the Pierce County YMCA three days a week that offers many of the same services.

"I'm working with a population of students that is largely low-income. And in this neighborhood, there is no Boys & Girls Club, no YMCA and no community center. What we do have is lots of hard-working parents and single moms, and students who need to take care of their siblings. Our kids don't often go to summer camp, take music lessons or play on ball teams. They just don't have access to very many activities outside school, so that's why we worked so hard to offer more opportunities through school," Renner said.



Brent Kline | *Mariner High School*

Students and Teachers Co-exist as a Community of Learners

By Laurel Bennett

Contributing Writer

Photo by Chris Tumbusch

Mariner High School lies in a pocket of unincorporated Snohomish County near Mukilteo, with no real neighborhoods in the surrounding area, save for the 100 or so apartment complexes that dot the landscape. And with such a high proportion of apartment dwellers, the population is very transient, making it even harder for students already challenged by poverty and language barriers to receive consistent, effective education.

Enter Principal Brent Kline and his team at Mariner, who have pledged

to mentor and stand up for these students, and to help them take advantage of all life has to offer, regardless of where they've come from. And as much as he wants students to learn about their world, he also spends a fair amount of time educating the community about the unique concerns of his school's population.

"When Mariner has a concern in the community, there's no mayor for us to go to, no city council meeting, so sometimes we appear at the Snohomish County Council meetings,

said Kline. "For instance, a few years ago, they removed the only bus stop from in front of our school, meaning kids would have to take one or more connecting buses just to get to class. We addressed the council to get that changed."

Literacy is power and freedom

Kline and the Mariner staff fight just as hard inside the school walls for their students.

When Kline took over in 2003, he began a focus that embraced academic improvement in all content areas and started a concept of authentic literacy using the motto: "Literacy is Power and Freedom." Reading rates and test scores have soared under his supervision.

He hired three reading teachers to work with the lowest achieving students and implemented professional development for staff that emphasizes the importance of reading across the curriculum. Staff and students still pause each day for 20 minutes of sustained silent reading.

The result has been a noticeable increase in academic achievement in language arts. In the past 10 years, student achievement in state assessments has increased from 52 percent

During the last few years, Kline also has led a focus on mathematics by implementing interventions that include daily collaboration among math teachers and an after-school program that requires the attendance of students who are not meeting standard. Ten years ago, only 28 percent of Mariner students met the state standard in math; today that has increased to 75 percent.

That improvement played a huge role in the fact that Mariner last year received both the OSPI School of Distinction Award in reading and mathematics, and the Washington Achievement Award in language arts. Mariner also received the Washington Achievement Award in 2009 for the school's improved graduation rate. And Kline is proud to report that when Boeing recently began offering

"Mariner students honored Mr. Kline during National Principals Month (October) with a book that was a compilation of student appreciation," wrote **Alison Brynson**, Executive Director of Secondary Schools for the Mukilteo School District, in her letter of recommendation for this award. "They thanked Kline for his leadership, concern for students, and his commitment to education."

Kline was assistant principal for two years at Mariner before being named principal in 2003. Previous to that he was dean of students and also served as a music teacher and as director of the school's marching band. Before coming to the Mukilteo School District in 1996, he taught in the Everett School District and in Clovis, Calif. He holds a bachelor's degree from California State University at Hayward and a master's degree from Western Washington University. Kline won the WESCO 3A/4A Conference principal of the year honors for 2012 from the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association.

One of Kline's most outstanding accomplishments has been his efforts to lead Mariner into becoming a true community of learners.

meeting standard to 79.5 percent meeting standard. The change has been seen in writing as well, where the number of students meeting standard has increased from 55 percent 10 years ago to 89 percent.

Kline has also seen to it that the community supports his vision for student literacy.

"Because most of our students are county residents, huge numbers of them cannot check out books from the city library that's only blocks from our school, without paying a fee that many cannot afford," he explained. After some trademark community activism, Mariner students now are able to check out books from a bookmobile that stops at the school and in the parking lot of the local Albertsons.

internships to local high-schoolers, all five spots were awarded to Mariner students.

Cross-content PLCs

One of Kline's most outstanding accomplishments has been his efforts to lead Mariner to becoming a true community of learners. All teachers are members of both content and cross-content Professional Learning Communities that focus solely on effective teaching and learning strategies. Interacting with students is also a huge priority in his daily work. You'll often find him in the hallway asking students about what they are learning, how their learning is complementing their future goals, and what their impression is of the school environment.

About the state principal of the year award

Kline was named the 2013 Washington State High School Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals, a governing board of AWSP. He was selected from seven finalists chosen from a field of 38 statewide nominees.

National honors

He now becomes eligible for the 2013 National Principals of the Year award. The program, sponsored by MetLife and the National Association of Secondary School Principals, annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. From the state winners, six finalists (three middle level, three high school) will compete for the award in Washington, D.C., later this year. ■



Ray Picicci | Cheney High School

Connecting with Kids and Teachers, One-on-One

By Laurel Bennett

Contributing Writer

Photo by Bryan Bowman

No one can accuse Cheney High School Assistant Principal Ray Picicci of hiding in his office. In fact, he's known for spending time everywhere but his office.

He can most often be found in the classrooms of Cheney High School observing teachers, taking pictures, then sharing instructional strategies with the rest of staff and interacting one-on-one with the students.

"I truly enjoy being an assistant principal," Picicci said. "As a building principal, you get pulled in many directions and your focus is broader. But as an assistant, I get to concentrate more on personal interactions with the kids here and to build relationships with them. And because I spend a lot of time in the classroom, I can directly participate in creating the culture of learning. This is a really nice niche for me."

And he keeps up the practice even with the extra demands that spring puts on the whole school.

"It's always a balance, especially at this time of year, but I just take a breath and still make an effort to be in 20 classrooms a week, plus assist the principal and help with evaluations... and still connect with our twelve-hundred kids," he said.

When not in observation mode, Picicci is co-teaching classes with new teachers until they feel comfortable. Or he's stepping in for teachers who have to leave school unexpectedly. Picicci also is a fixture in the hallways and cafeteria.

As Cheney High School Principal **Troy Heuett** says, "He is quick to strike up a conversation with or offer an encouraging word to many students as he makes his rounds."

And although Picicci manages the traditional assistant principal's role as disciplinarian, he doesn't equate what he does with punishment.

"The best way to approach discipline is to do restorative things that change

He organizes all the school's state testing, created an after-school homework center with tutors from local colleges, was the driver behind the summer school program, and has put together most of the school's intervention systems, including a successful inclusion model that spans several grade levels and subjects.

"Ray has challenged me to always do more for our students, and I thank him for his drive, and his vision to establish confidence in all students who enter our building," said Heuett, who has known and worked with Picicci for 12 years.

The most notable strengths that Picicci brings to his job are enthusiasm, personalization and appreciation, both

The most notable strengths that Picicci brings to his job are enthusiasm, personalization and appreciation, both for his students and his staff.

behavior but protect the student's dignity and instill confidence. They need to know that you're going to work with them on whatever the problem is and that you do care about them," he explained.

"It sounds like it's hard to do, but discipline at Cheney High is not about me or the school winning, it's about working with kids and their families for a true win-win," he added. "In that regard, I try to leave at the end of the day feeling like I've made a difference."

Picicci has served as the assistant principal at Cheney High School since 2007. He is the lead for curriculum, instruction and assessment. He has increased attention to learning targets, taken new teachers under his wing, been highly involved at the district level with literacy, math and science committees and the highly capable program.

for his students and his staff. This includes writing postcards home to students saying, "Nice job!" or calling home to give a struggling student encouragement.

"And it's fun giving high-fives and being goofy in the halls with kids. They need to know I'm not here to judge them or to make their lives harder," Picicci said.

Showing appreciation goes deeper at Cheney, as when the administration cooked breakfast for the whole staff during Teacher Appreciation Week.

"We always had recognized Teacher Appreciation Week, but on this one we got together and really put our hands on it by cooking the breakfast ourselves," he recalled. "This sort of thing always pays back more than it takes away."

Before coming to Cheney, Picicci was a science and biology teacher at Shadle Park and North Central high schools. He earned a zoology degree from Washington State University, a biology degree from Eastern Washington University and a master in teaching degree from Whitworth University.

He earned his principal certification from WSU, and has taken coursework toward a doctoral degree in educational leadership from WSU. He is involved with extra-curricular activities at Cheney, serves on AWSP's high-school governing board, and coaches soccer, baseball and basketball in the community.

About the state assistant principal of the year Award

The Washington State Assistant Principal of the Year honor alternates yearly between a middle level principal (selected by the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals) and a high school principal (chosen by the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals).

National honors

Picicci was honored this spring in Washington, D.C., as part of National Assistant Principal of the Year Award festivities, sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Virco, Inc. While he was among the pool of candidates, Picicci was not chosen as one of three finalists for this year's national honor. ■

Instead of writing my usual column this year, I invited school practitioners to share their experiences leading an outdoor school program at one of AWSP's sites. AWSP is the only principals association in the country that operates learning centers. I know you'll enjoy reading the adventures of the

West Valley School District and North Tapps Middle School at AWSP's Chewelah Peak and Cispus learning centers.

Marty Fortin

AWSP Director of Outdoor Learning Centers

West Valley School District hikes and harmonizes in the mountains

Chewelah Peak Learning Center

By Jami Ostby-Marsh

Education Director, West Valley Outdoor Learning Center

It's June. West Valley School District's 5th graders have just finished their state tests. They're thinking of summer break and the move to middle school.

They're also packing their bags for the district's yearly 5th grade adventure to AWSP's Chewelah Peak Learning Center. All of West Valley's 5th graders spend two nights and three days in the shadow of 5,774 foot Chewelah Peak. Four classes at a time (from four different elementary schools), students get mixed and mingled, challenged, changed, taught, studied, slept (a little—those darn frogs), hiked and harmonized under the guidance of West Valley Outdoor Learning Center (WVOLC) staff.

Most years we have very cooperative weather (minus the freak snow storm of 2010 or the 80-degree weather of 2005). Students take part in daily lessons taught by WVOLC staff and evening activities such as campfire, mountain biking, archery and games (energetically supervised by West Valley High School students).

For many of our students this is their first time away from home, so it can be scary. The idea of the West Valley School District camp experience is that not only is it the capstone event of their K-5 science experience, but it



5th grade students from West Valley School District hike to the lighting tree over looking the 49 Degrees North Ski Area. The lighting tree is one of the legends around camp that kids love to see.

is a time to meet new friends they will see next year at middle school. I love seeing new friendships forged. One of my favorite camp moments is the first group meal. Some students have never had the experience of sitting down with a group of people and eating food together. To hear their excitement about the day's events is one of the most wonderful sounds to witness.

I want to share two stories with you. They are from a camp counselor and they tell of lives that were transformed through this humble 5th grade overnight experience. We have changed the names to protect the students' privacy.

The first student, Billy, is new to his school and lives with his grandparents who are very poor.

"Billy's father abandoned him, and his mother wasn't able to care for him any longer so CPS moved him. He's had it tough. Billy's comment to me about Chewelah Peak was, 'I had the time of my life! I love being in nature and camping, I don't ever get to do that kind of stuff because my grandparents are too old and it costs too much money.' And most importantly, 'the food was AWESOME, we ate like rich people.' Currently, I am working with Union Gospel Mission in Seattle

to provide a free camp for him this summer.”

The second student, Johnny, is also new since January.

“Johnny had been placed in Behavior Intervention programs in Seattle since kindergarten. He now lives with his grandmother and younger brother. His father was just sentenced to 15 years in prison. The past six months have been challenging at school, but he continues to amaze us with his keen sense of humor and common sense approach to life. He was one kiddo that was considered ‘sitting on the fence’ as far as going to Chewelah. But he came back bright-eyed and full of stories. He said to me, ‘It was life-changing at camp.’ Who says that? A child who never gets to experience all that nature and the outdoors has to offer. He loved it, and said the staff was fun, activities were great, food was awesome, and he didn’t want to leave. He too, is one I hope to get a free week of camp for, at Union Gospel Mission. Thank you, Jami!”

I could find a dozen or more stories about how camp impacts youth but I felt like these two really highlighted the life-changing adventures that kids experience here. I find myself reading them often when, as an adult, I get tired from planning and prepping the camp each year. They are my reminder that each kid needs time at camp no matter what type of life they come from.

So as I gear up for my 10th year of camp—sending out permission slips, counting adults for meals, getting crayons, paper, lessons and first aid equipment ready—I am reminded that it’s time again for the class of 2019 to have their camp experience. I am motivated by the fact that we could be starting a new passion for hiking in the woods, camping with families or creating future environmental educators. Or simply changing a life. ■

Continued on page 40

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North Tapps Middle School takes to the woods

Cispus Learning Center

By Nate Salisbury

Principal, North Tapps Middle School
Dieringer SD

North Tapps Middle School takes 6th grade learning to the woods. Literally. Every October, 6th grade students spend the better part of a week at AWSP's Cispus Learning Center. The whole trip is about learning. Even on the drive to camp we stop at Alder Dam and the students learn the science related to dams, salmon and fish ladders.

The teaching staff love trading their brick-and-mortar classrooms for the wild outdoors of the Gifford Pinchot National Forest. No subject is left behind. Everything from science, language arts, reading and Pacific Northwest history, physical education, art and home economics can be taught at Cispus.

The state-of-the-art science labs at North Tapps cannot hold a candle to the outdoor lab of salmon spawning in the Cispus River. Students document what they are learning in science notebooks that accompany them to camp. These notebooks are referred to later at camp as well when students return to school.

No running laps for PE while at camp. We go on hiking trips and tackle the ropes course. We learn how to cook meals on a campfire (home ec). We study native Indian tribes and learn about Mt. St. Helens firsthand (history). Kids read and journal both coming, going and during cabin time (language arts). Art teacher **Denise Lakin** teaches them how to do water-color prints of salmon.

We also stress teamwork and relationship building. This leads to a stronger and more positive environment back at North Tapps for the rest of the students.

At North Tapps, we know the outdoor learning experience is fun way to start the middle school journey. But we also see correlations to student growth. Year after year, our students consistently score in the upper percentiles on Washington's Measurement of Student Progress test. We strongly believe that the outdoor learning experience at the



North Tapps Middle School Principal Nate Salisbury and his 6th grade daughter, Ellie Salisbury, experienced Camp Cispus together this school year.

COURTESY NATE SALISBURY

beginning of the 6th grade year is one of the major elements of the students' academic success in the years that follow. ■

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Reflect on Your Year

Thinking about the substance of your year can provide a great roadmap for the future.

By Sharon Green

AWSP Director of Diversity Initiatives and Services

The school year is now drawing to a close. You will probably spend some time reflecting on your year. One of the themes you might touch on is, “What have I learned this year that will help me in planning for next year?” I’ve been doing the same reflection.

I started the year by attending several conferences where the main topic of inquiry was the “School-to-Prison Pipeline.” School-to-prison pipeline is the term used to call attention to the policies and procedures that push children out of classrooms and into the juvenile and criminal justice system.

Following those conferences, “Reclaiming Students” by Washington Appleseed and Team Child, a report about out-of-school suspensions in Washington State, was released. Appendix E of the report highlights some of the innovative strategies being used by schools in Washington state.

The report generated lots of discussion from all sides. The Seattle Times Editorial Board, editorial articles from professionals who deal with child/student issues, letters to the editor, and human interest stories—such as Jerry Large’s article about **Jim Sporleder**, principal of Lincoln High School in Walla Walla—have kept the discussion going for months.

Several bills on this topic were introduced into legislation this past session and at least some version will probably be passed.

Probably no issue is more fraught with emotion than that of discipline and suspension, wrapped up as it is in

active Justice program with her students.

In the coming year, AWSP’s Diversity Task Force will compile our own list of schools, from around the state and at each level. We will showcase those that are trying innovative programs and

What have I learned this year that will help me in planning for next year?

school safety, race, ethnicity, disability, community concern and professional accountability. It is hard to read these reports and listen to others question how we handle this issue. And, sometimes it’s hard not to feel as if the schools shouldered all the blame.

However, upon further reflection, I thought about schools all over the state that are engaged in programs and strategies to help keep students in school and diminish out-of-school suspension when imminent safety issues are not the main concern.

I specifically want to mention the Community Café model used in the North Thurston School District. Principal **Bruce Walton** at Pleasant Glade Elementary School and Principal **Karen Remy-Anderson** at River Ridge High School started using that program last year. And, Principal **Whitney Meissner** at Chimacum Middle/High School, uses the Restor-

strategies. We will share with you what principals see working at their schools, and how you might benefit from their experience.

Summer Reading

Now it is time for you to take a well deserved summer break to relax and enjoy family and friends. If you decide you want to dip into a little reading here are some resources which might be helpful:

- www.dignityinschools.org
- www.restorativesolutions.us/schools.html
- www.thecommunitycafe.com
- www.WaAppleseed.org
- www.TeamChild.org
- www.Tolerance.org
- “Leadership for Equity,” by Barton & Larson, in NASSP’s Principal’s Research Review, March 2012 ■

Climate and Culture

Climate and culture are not interchangeable. Climate is day-to-day. Culture is built over time. Students are a key element to both.

By Susan Fortin

AWSP Director of Student Leadership

When referring to schools we often use the words “climate” and “culture” interchangeably. With student leaders we stress their role (and responsibility) in helping to create a positive climate, but is this really the same thing as creating culture—which is Criteria 1 in the AWSP Leadership Framework?

A recent ASCD Blog by David Jakes intrigued me. He defined the culture of a school as being represented by its shared beliefs, its ceremonies, its nuances, the traditions and the things that make the school unique. He proposed that the climate is represented by the immediate and current conditions that exist in the school. Culture is created over years, while school climate is found in the day-to-day.

Building a positive school climate lies at the heart of the work we do with student leaders through our AWSP-sponsored leadership camps and trainings. Our mantra, “ASB= All Students Belong” challenges student leaders to be purposeful in the activities, programs and projects they undertake. With principal support, students can continue to be your partners in sponsoring the day-to-day events and activities that boost climate. Over time, elements of your school’s climate will become part of its culture.

What’s happening in Washington schools around creating a positive

climate? More than you can realize. Here are some examples from principals who serve on the AWSP Student Leadership committees:

Break the Box

Heather Miller, Principal

Timbercrest Junior High, Northshore SD



Students at Timbercrest Junior High in Woodinville participate in an activity designed to combat HIB. It was created by Principal Heather Miller and her staff.

After mid-winter break, Timbercrest students participated in daily discussions regarding empathy, kindness, labeling, bullying and harassment. The program, which we titled “Break the Box,” was created by staff and was delivered each day by our student facilitators. More than 70 student leaders were trained to facilitate these sessions, and our leadership class created videos that were shown throughout the week. Students had the opportunity to engage with other students and check their own thinking around labeling, kindness and empathy

towards others. Our goal is always to create a caring school community. Our “Break the Box” student leaders also delivered this program to sixth grade students at our five feeder elementary schools over a two-week period. The student leaders were awesome and the sixth grade students were receptive and great participants! We have a continual goal to connect with the elementary schools to share our programs.

Points, Points Points!

Doup LaMunyon, Principal

Pomeroy Jr./Sr High, Pomeroy SD

We have class competition points that are renewed each month. Classes receive points through traditional competitions like homecoming and pep assemblies, but we’ve found success in adding other avenues to earn points. Classes can earn points daily for keeping their hallway clean. Weekly, we have an academic Friday where students who are receiving a D or less in class or missing assignments must go to the class they are struggling in. Students who are doing well get an extra 20 minutes for lunch. The class with the highest percentage of students who do not have to attend academic Fridays receives points as well. Finally, we have character points. If a staff member observes a student doing something extraordinary, his or her class will receive points. At the end of the month, the class with the most points receives a reward. The ASB purchases maple bars, or a slice of pizza or a root beer float for all members of the class. It has been very positive and our hallways have never been cleaner.

Superheroes Honor Assembly
Nathan Gregory, Assistant Principal
Park Middle School, Kennewick SD



COURTESY NATHAN GREGORY

A bouncy slide in middle school? You bet! Park Middle School Assistant Principal Nathan Gregory and staff turned a ho-hum honors assembly into a "Super" event.

We changed up our honor assembly with great results. Presented by grade level, the assembly now highlights honor roll and attendance. We moved subject-specific and improvement awards to classroom presentations. This freed up time at the assembly to allow each honoree, our "Superheroes," to take their moment in the spot-

light while sliding down an inflatable bouncy slide. There was a lot of energy around the assembly and we're hoping this becomes a motivator for more kids to improve grades and attendance.

Make a Difference Camp
Michael E. Hittle, Principal
*Central Valley High School,
 Central Valley SD*

We conducted our annual "Make a Difference Camp" last December for about 150 students. Since we changed the name from "Leadership Camp," our numbers have increased and our attendance has represented more of the diversity in our school. (Under the old name, some students felt they weren't leaders yet or that they weren't "worthy" to attend). With increased diverse attendance and a focus on making a difference, we now have better buy-in for the great ideas the camp has produced for improving our school climate.

HIB Assembly: Keep it Real
Teri Kessie, Principal
Chiawana High School, Pasco

Our kids sponsored an outstanding HIB assembly where they shared their stories (and stories submitted anonymously) of HIB in their lives. I also wrote my story from middle school, which was read by a student. At the end of the story, they divulged it was the principal of the school. The kids have stopped me since and thanked me for being willing to share. Working together I think we made more of an impact than we would have otherwise. ■

These samples will be housed in the resources section of the new AWSP website coming this summer. Have a sample to share? Email it to susan@awsp.org

Creating a Culture is Criterion 1 of the AWSP Leadership Framework. Additional resources on school climate and culture are available at: www.schoolclimate.org

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Joe Willhoft, Ph.D.

Executive Director, Smarter Balanced

Joe Willhoft is the Executive Director of the Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium, one of two groups developing systems to assess the Common Core State Standards across the country. Washington is a lead state in Smarter Balanced. Its 24 member states serve about 19 million students. Prior to joining Smarter Balanced in 2010, Willhoft was Assistant Superintendent for Assessment and Student Information

for OSPI for six years. He holds a doctorate in educational measurement and statistics from the University of Maryland, a master's degree in special education from The American University, and a bachelor's degree in art from Webster University. He has taught at all grade levels from kindergarten to graduate school in four states. Willhoft is past president of the Maryland Assessment Group and the Washington Educational Research



Association. He has been involved in several major collaborative data and assessment efforts, including congressionally-mandated evaluation of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP).

1. We are proud of your personal success at being chosen to lead Smarter Balanced after you left OSPI. What drew you to that job?

Thanks for the acknowledgment. I should start by clarifying that I am still an employee of OSPI. The Smarter Balanced Assessment Consortium is funded through a grant from the US Department of Education, and the State of Washington stepped up to the plate and agreed to be the fiscal agent for that grant. So, on behalf of all 24 member states, I should give a “call out” to Superintendent Dorn for his continuing support of Smarter Balanced. As to what drew me to this job, I simply saw it as a way to apply what I have learned in over 30 years in the assessment business to be involved in a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to build a truly game-changing assessment system.

2. Principals are worried about the technology requirements and funding for this new assessment system. How is Smarter Balanced addressing these issues?

First, I hope all schools know about our online “Technology Readiness Survey.” If not, contact your district IT folks, or Dennis Small at OSPI to learn more. This is a tool that schools can use to find out if there’s a gap between what they currently have in terms of technology, and what Smarter Balanced will require. Second, I want folks to know that Smarter Balanced will support a paper-and-pencil form of the test for three years, which will be granted to schools in a manner similar to the way P/P testing has been allowed as MSP has transitioned to online testing. Finally, I hope everyone realizes that we are NOT talking about a one-to-one computer ratio. In fact, our “back of the envelope” calculations indicate that an elementary or middle school of 600 students could be supported with a single computer lab of about 30 computers.

3. Word on the street is that test scores will drop dramatically, at least at first. What happens to students with these lower scores during the transition time? Will lower scores affect their ability to get into college?

The real question here is likely, “What will happen to principals and superintendents?” There almost certainly will be a drop. Remember, the new assessments are benchmarked against an 11th grade standard of being ready for credit-bearing coursework in college or university without remediation. And, that benchmark cascades down through grades, with each previous grade signaling whether or not the student is “on track” to that 11th grade standard. Fortunately, in Washington, we have the benefit of having been here once before. Many of us can recall when Washington first ventured into standards-based assessments in the early ‘90s, when we had between 20-30 percent meeting standard on our reading, writing and math tests. We were able to manage the communications challenges then, and can do that again—but not without concerted

effort on everyone's part to remind our communities that these new assessments are aligned to what we think students should know and be able to do, and that they are benchmarked against meaningful, 21st century standards.

4. We see potential for overlap between the Smarter Balanced tests and other state assessments. Do you see a future synergy?

There are several overlaps, and the OSPI assessment folks and Smarter Balanced continue to discuss what those are, and how we can integrate these efforts. Nobody wants to do more testing that we need to, and I do think we will see some "synergies," as you mention.

5. You just completed pilot-testing the assessments here in Washington. How many schools participated and how did it go?

Almost 200 Washington schools participated and it went well. We are particularly excited about the fact that the pilot test used an early version of the actual testing software that we will be using in 2014-15. So, those schools got an early opportunity to test-drive our software.

6. What role will principals play in the successful integration of Smarter Balanced assessments?

One thing I would encourage principals to learn more about is the "system" nature of the Smarter Balanced assessments. In addition to the end-of-year summative assessments that are used for federal accountability (and that will replace the MSP and HSPE for that purpose) Smarter Balanced provides interim assessments that schools and districts can design and give throughout the year. And, Smarter Balanced also includes a significant component to provide supports for day-to-day assessment strategies that teachers can use to assess student learning of the Common Core. Principals should visit www.smarterbalanced.org and sign up to keep on top of our developments.

7. Do you have a motto or personal philosophy?

Other than "Go Sonics!" due to being a pretty big fan of "roundball," I would have to say that this experience reinforces my longstanding belief that when you get different but well-intended people together you end up with better solutions than when you try to do something on your own.

8. What books/magazines are on your nightstand/e-reader?

I generally keep up with my New Yorker and Science News magazines. Right now I am most of the way through a book called "Shakespeare's Kings," where every chapter is the history of a medieval British monarch, followed by the story that Shakespeare told. It's interesting how the artistic interpretation of what really happened, as opposed to the factual, is what has endured.

9. Describe an instance where a principal made an impact on your life, either while you were in school or during your teaching career.

I will never forget my first principal, Joe Curtis in Washington, D.C. public schools. Looking back, I realize how incredibly patient Mr. Curtis was with me, and how valuable was his support for a beginning teacher.

10. What is one piece of advice you'd like to leave with Washington principals?

As they say in the "Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy" book, "Don't Panic." The new Common Core standards really are better for students and for our state, and these new assessments are being designed with the utmost of care to provide accurate and fair measures of how students are progressing. ■

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Public Participation



Principal Sandy Dennehy (second from left), collaborates with the three teachers who are now team-teaching multi-grade classes at Kirk Elementary. From left: Erika Keck, Kacie Simpson and Amy Hubbard.

By Kathryn Reith, APR

*Director of Communications
Lake Washington School District*

Students don't arrive at school in numbers that neatly fit into class sizes. And when a particular group of students is just a little too big, parents can get frustrated. Last spring, Principal **Sandy Dennehy** of Kirk Elementary in Kirkland, faced yet another year of large class sizes for the group that would be entering fourth grade. Sandy knew that parents had already been in touch with the superintendent about class size and were increasingly frustrated.

She knew she needed a different solution.

Shortly thereafter, Sandy attended a district leadership team meeting where Lake Washington Superintendent **Traci Pierce, Ed.D.** shared the district's interest in increasing public participation in its decision-making process. Sandy knew she needed involvement of all stakeholders. She needed a process that would educate parents while engaging them at the right level. That led her to my office and to the beginning of a collaboration using communication and public process to make a decision for her overcrowded classroom that would be

best for kids and satisfy the adults' concerns.

What is public participation?

Public participation simply means to involve those who are affected by a decision in the decision making process. It promotes sustainable decisions by providing participants with the information they need to be involved in a meaningful way, and it communicates to participants how their input affects the decision.

During our first planning meeting, I laid out for Sandy some of the principles around the public participation concept. This helped her feel more comfortable about opening up the decision-making process. I explained that ultimately this was Sandy's decision to make. Public participation did not mean there was going to be a parent or staff vote. Increasing involvement did not mean a loss of control.

Sandy pointed out that parents did not understand the limited parameters in which she had to work. We agreed that parent education would be a focus. Sandy committed to my request for

transparency throughout the process. For parents and staff members to trust the results, they would need to know that their input had been considered and how it had affected the final decision. That was a leap of faith Sandy made willingly.

The decision-making process

After identifying all stakeholders, we laid out a plan that began with getting buy-in from PTSA leaders and from the Building Leadership Team (BLT). Teachers were concerned about giving parents false hope that they would get whatever they wanted.

We set up a decision-making process: Parents would articulate their concerns and provide feedback to a committee. The committee—made up of one representative from each grade (K-5) and two parents—would make a recommendation. The final decision remained with Sandy, the principal. In getting buy-in, we stressed that parents would be educated first on the constraints so they would not expect a solution that was not possible.

Sandy and I presented the plan to a packed PTSA meeting that also served

as the first part of the educational process. Sandy laid out all the student numbers and staffing plan. She went through the constraints that she as principal faced in determining class sizes. She answered all questions about how the process would work.

At that meeting, the PTSA voted on the two parent representatives to sit on the committee. Sandy later published all the information in the school newsletter and on the school website, so parents who could not attend would also have access.

Survey of parents and staff

Right after the meeting, we opened an online survey to determine parent interests in grade-level configuration. The survey results showed that small class sizes were parents' first interest, followed by equity in class sizes among grade bands. Some parents thought multi-grade classes would be a great solution while others were adamantly opposed to them.

A staff survey showed their highest interest was in a collaborative team, no matter the configuration, followed by class sizes as small as possible. Teachers wanted to make sure that those in their ranks who were not philosophically comfortable with multi-grade classes did not have to teach them.

Explore what others are doing

The committee's first meeting surrounded what other information and research they would need to come to the best solution. The research included information on best practices for multi-grade classrooms, and a review of what other schools were doing to meet similar situations.

Armed with the survey results and best practice information, Sandy developed seven different options. During a half-day meeting at a nearby junior high, the committee reviewed the options and came up with pros and cons for each. Through the process of examining each of the options in

detail, the committee actually came up with a new solution that would best meet all their needs.

We constructed a final online survey, asking for reaction to each alternative. The results provided Sandy with additional feedback to help make her decision.

The chosen solution

Based on all the feedback and the committee's recommendations, the chosen solution was to restructure into two single-grade 4th grade classes, two single-grade 5th grade classes, and three combination classes of both fourth and fifth graders. The three teachers assigned to the combination classes were teachers who were interested in working with multi-grade classes and who looked forward to collaborating and teaching together as a team. Parents could give input on their child's placement in either a single-grade or a multi-grade class.

If we had undertaken this decision without increased public participation, the results would likely have been different. As it was, when Sandy reported her decision to the community, she got very little reaction. Parents clearly felt heard and included. A large portion of the parent popula-

tion had taken part in the surveys and was following the process through the newsletter. "Consistent communication throughout the process was really important," she noted. "The more transparent we were about this, the less people could come back and say they didn't have a say."

A foundation of trust and transparency

"The legacy of the process is that it built a foundation of trust and transparency," noted Sandy. "It built on our communication process and how we collaborate with families." Not only did parents feel more trust but staff did as well. "They saw that parents could have input but ultimately as a staff we did what we felt was best for kids. They knew I ultimately had the decision-making power and I achieved that balance of collaborating between the staff and parents. I would not have been able to do that without this process in place." ■

Kathryn Reith, APR, who has been Communications Director for the Lake Washington School District for eight years, is a member of the International Association for Public Participation.

Key points to remember:

- Identify all stakeholders
- Determine your public participation goal
- Find out the interests and perspectives of stakeholders
- The more the decision impacts stakeholders, the more input they will want to have
- Educate everyone on the issue, including any parameters the decision must be within
- Communicate with stakeholders on when/how they will have their say in the decision
- Be clear who will make the decision and when
- Share all input with the stakeholders who gave the input
- Make sure stakeholders know how their input was used
- Keep the best interest of kids at the center of the process

For more information on public participation; www.iap2.org.

ESD 101

Matthew Beal: Sunset Elementary, Cheney PS
Pamela Brantner: Sunnyside Elementary, Pullman SD
Dawn Bushyeager: University High, Central Valley SD
Robert Cameron: Lakeside Middle, Nine Mile Falls SD
Adrianna DiGregorio: Lincoln Middle, Pullman SD
Darcy Eliason: Palouse SD
Shawna Fraser: C/O Windsor Elementary, Cheney PS
James High-Edward: Shadle Park High, Spokane PS
Nikki Hittle: Wellpinit Elementary, Wellpinit SD
Daniel Hutton: Tekoa Jr./Sr. High, Tekoa SD
Patricia Kannberg: Brentwood Elementary, Mead SD
Nicole Karaus: Trent Elementary, East Valley SD #361
Bradley Liberg: West Valley SD #363
Leisa Lybbert: Willard Elementary, Spokane PS
Carol Mahoney: Betz Elementary, Cheney PS
Christine Moore: Shadle Park High, Spokane PS
Eileen Nave: Great Northern Elementary, Great Northern SD
Jamie Nelson: Washtucna Jr/Sr High, Washtucna SD
Robyn O'Connor: Lincoln Middle, Pullman SD
Stacy O'Reilly-Bezama: East Valley SD #361
Chad Prewitt: Davenport Jr/Sr High, Davenport SD
Jason Reed: Oakesdale Elementary & High, Oakesdale SD
Heather Richardson: Stevens Elementary, Spokane PS
Alan Robbins: University High, Central Valley SD
Ralph Simmerer: Centennial Middle, West Valley SD #363
Suzanne Smith: The Community School, Spokane PS
Christopher Spring: Medical Lake High, Medical Lake SD
Courtney Strozlyk: Reardan Middle/High, Reardan-Edwall SD
Gregory Swartz: Deer Park Elementary, Deer Park SD
Bradley Van Dyne: Freeman Elementary, Freeman SD
Aron Watts: Evergreen Elementary, Mead SD

ESD 105

Alysia Arsanto: Chief Kamiakin Elementary, Sunnyside SD
Angela Carrizales: Sunnyside High, Sunnyside SD
Joe Coscarart: Selah High, Selah SD
Stacey Drake: Barge-Lincoln Elementary, Yakima PS
Vicki Dwight: Franklin Middle, Yakima PS
Joshua Eidson: Sunnyside High, Sunnyside SD
John Hannah: Harrah Elementary, Mount Adams SD
Andrew Harlow: Wahluke Junior High, Wahluke SD
Nicholas Hartman: West Valley Junior High, West Valley SD #208
Paul Hudson: Selah Intermediate, Selah SD
Anna Keifer: Wapato High, Wapato SD
Roy Knox: Yakima PS
Sean Langdon: Wahluke Junior High, Wahluke SD
Jesse Macy: Granger High, Granger SD
Elyse Mengarelli: Zillah Middle, Zillah SD
Kim Newell: Selah Junior High, Selah SD
Jeri Paulakis: Sun Valley Elementary, Sunnyside SD
Brandon Pontius: Outlook Elementary, Sunnyside SD
Frank Reed: Barge-Lincoln Elementary, Yakima PS
Beau Snow: Ellensburg High, Ellensburg SD
Jonathan Stern: Sunnyside High, Sunnyside SD
Matthew Toth: East Valley High, East Valley SD #90
Holly Urness: Wahluke Junior High, Wahluke SD
Scott Wells: Hoover and Robertson Elementaries, Yakima PS

ESD 112

Jodelle Allinger: RA Long High, Longview SD
Lucinda Bancroft: Maple Grove K-8, Battle Ground PS
Sarah Becker: King's Way Christian (Private)
Megan Botnen: McLoughlin Middle, Vancouver PS
Diane Castle: Daybreak Primary, Battle Ground PS
Greg Clark: Gaiser Middle, Vancouver PS
Matthew Fechter: Martin Luther King Elementary, Vancouver PS
Gregory Gardner: Kelso High, Kelso SD
James Gray: Skyview High, Vancouver PS

Dirk Hansen: Fort Vancouver High, Vancouver PS
Veronica Heller: Woodland Intermediate, Woodland SD
Derek Jaques: Camas High, Camas SD
Todd Karnofski: Evergreen High, Evergreen PS
Matthew Kesler: Heritage High, Evergreen PS
Katie Kipp: La Center Middle, La Center SD
Angela Knight: Hearthwood Elementary, Evergreen PS
Stephanie Leitz: Wahkiakum High, Wahkiakum SD
Barbara Lomas: Mill A SD
Carol Maloney: Tukes Valley Middle, Battle Ground PS
Craig McKee: Stevenson High, Stevenson-Carson SD
Cathy Meinhardt: Ocean Park Elementary, Ocean Beach SD
Tilly Meyer: Shahala Middle, Evergreen PS
Brian Morris: Stevenson High, Stevenson-Carson SD
Yelena Ovdienko: Evergreen High, Evergreen PS
Griffin Peyton: Pacific Middle, Evergreen PS
Travis Poulsen: Monticello Middle, Longview SD
Marjorie Ruzicka: Fort Vancouver High, Vancouver PS
Andrew Schoonover: Chief Umtuch Middle, Battle Ground PS
Sara Tackett: Walnut Grove Elementary, Vancouver PS
Susan Watson: Tukes Valley Primary, Battle Ground PS
Stephanie Watts: Prairie High, Battle Ground PS
Troy Winzer: McLoughlin Middle, Vancouver PS
Kim Yore: Barnes Elementary, Kelso SD

ESD 113

Taylor Barnes: Evaline Elementary, Evaline SD
Scott Chamberlain: W F West High, Chehalis SD
Courtney Crawford: Aspire Middle, North Thurston PS
Angela DeAguiar: Seven Oaks Elementary, North Thurston PS
Kelli DeMonte: Horizons Elementary, North Thurston PS
Rachel Dorsey: Chehalis Middle, Chehalis SD
Corey Frood: Chinook Middle, North Thurston PS
Charles Greenwell: Tumwater High, Tumwater SD
Rhonda Ham: Ocean Shores Elementary, North Beach SD
Jennifer Hewitt: Yelm High, Yelm Community Schools
Stephanie Hollinger: Olympic View Elementary, North Thurston PS
Christopher Howell: Harbor High, Aberdeen SD
Jane Hunter: Hood Canal School, Hood Canal SD
Scott Hyder: Hoquiam High, Hoquiam SD
Mandy Jesse: Pioneer Primary, Pioneer SD
Nimira Jetha: Black Lake Elementary, Tumwater SD
Ruth Kuhnau: Miller Junior High, Aberdeen SD
Ivy Marple: Jefferson Middle, Olympia SD
John Meers: AJ West Elementary, Aberdeen SD
Bryant Mettler: Grand Mound Elementary, Rochester SD
Jennifer Moore: Napavine Elementary, Napavine SD
Nancy Morris: Willapa Valley High, Willapa Valley SD
Jason Prather: Napavine Jr/Sr High, Napavine SD
Richard Rasanen: Oakville Schools, Oakville SD
Kristin Soderback: Oakville Middle/High, Oakville SD
Karen Tollefson: White Pass Elementary, White Pass SD

ESD 114

Josephine Bean: Fairview Junior High/Clear Creek Elem, Central Kitsap SD
Laurie Bender: Port Angeles High, Port Angeles SD
Charla Cole: South Kitsap High, South Kitsap SD
David Copenbarger: Central Kitsap Junior High, Central Kitsap SD
Rachel Davenport: Kingston High, North Kitsap SD
Lisa Deen: Port Townsend SD
Freda Evans: South Kitsap High, South Kitsap SD
Lisa Fundanet: Orchard Heights Elementary, South Kitsap SD
Kristy Grinnell: Klahowya Secondary School, Central Kitsap SD
Lynn Heimsoth: Kitsap Lake Elementary, Bremerton SD
Joey Johnson: Port Townsend High, Port Townsend SD
Renee Lancaster: Stevens Middle, Port Angeles SD
Shelley Langston: Sequim SD
Stephanie Lewis: Sequim High, Sequim SD
Russ Lodge: Helen Haller Elementary, Sequim SD
Mark Mayfield: North Kitsap High, North Kitsap SD

Dan Novick: Ridgetop Junior High, Central Kitsap SD
Rachel Osborn: Richard Gordon Elementary, North Kitsap SD
Brianna Pope: South Kitsap High, South Kitsap SD
Elizabeth Roberts: North Mason SD
Thomasina Rogers: Green Mountain Elementary, Central Kitsap SD
Cassandra Rosenbloom: East Port Orchard Elementary, South Kitsap SD
Sean Schoenfeldt: Dry Creek Elementary, Port Angeles SD
Mary Sepler: Grant Street Elementary, Port Townsend SD
Gary Stebbins: Breidablik Elementary, North Kitsap SD
Cindy Webster: Chief Kitsap Academy, Tribal School
Scott Yingling: South Kitsap High, South Kitsap SD
Jeffrey Youde: Quilcene High & Elementary, Quilcene SD

ESD 121

Michael Aaron: Muckleshoot Tribal School
Tom Adams: Curtis High, University Place SD
Brigid Addanki: ASA Mercer Middle, Seattle PS
Robert Aguilar: Redmond Middle, Lake Washington SD
Ryan Akiyama: Lakes High, Clover Park SD
Royce Albert: Steilacoom High, Steilacoom SD
Tammy Alonzo: Washington Virtual Academies (WAVA), K12, Inc.
Stephen Anderson: Lakota Middle, Federal Way PS
Bethany Aoki: Cougar Mountain Middle, Bethel SD
Jeremy Argo: White River High, White River SD
Julia Bare: Edison Elementary, Tacoma PS
Colleen Barlow: Gildo Rey Elementary, Auburn SD
Mark Barnes: Frontier Middle, Bethel SD
Jennifer Benkovitz: Salmon Bay School (K-8), Seattle PS
Vikki Berard: Kokanee Elementary, Northshore SD
Carol Best: Discovery Elementary, Issaquah SD
Tipton Blish: Ballard High, Seattle PS
Laura Bohn: Mount View Elementary, Highline PS
Christopher Brannon: Chief Leschi Elementary, Chief Leschi Schools
Michael Braun: Rainier Beach High, Seattle PS
Dawn Brown: Internet Academy, Federal Way PS
Lawrence Brown: Manitou Park Elementary, Tacoma PS
Douglas Burnham: Rainier Middle, Auburn SD
Artise Burton: Denny International Middle, Seattle PS
Michael Bylsma: Timbercrest Jr High, Northshore SD
Sena Camarata: Oliver Hazen High, Renton SD
Lucy Carrillo: Remann Hall, Tacoma PS
Clair Chean: Kent SD
Walter Chen: Aki Kurose Middle, Seattle PS
Michael Clancy: Eatonville High, Eatonville SD
Anthony Clarke: Bonney Lake High, Sumner SD
John Coalson: Gray Middle, Tacoma PS
David Crane: Lochburn Middle, Clover Park SD
Lisa Crowell: Orting Middle, Orting SD
Jeff D'Ambrosio: Mercer Island High, Mercer Island SD
Robert Darling: West Mercer Elementary, Mercer Island SD
Chad Davidson: Thunder Mountain Middle, Enumclaw SD
Leila Davis: Evergreen Elementary, Clover Park SD
Paula DeMoss: Minter Creek Elementary, Peninsula SD
Paul Didier: Arts and Academics Academy, Highline PS
Thomas Dudley: Terminal Park Elementary, Auburn SD
Meghan Eakin: Beachwood Elementary, Clover Park SD
Deborah Engelbrekt-Stone: Shelton View Elementary, Northshore SD
Jayne Evans: Washington Virtual Academies (WAVA), K12, Inc.
Deirdre Fauntleroy: Beacon Hill International, Seattle PS
Angela Franklin: Evergreen Primary, University Place SD
Heather Frazier: Carl Sandburg Elementary, Lake Washington SD
Eric Fredericks: Puyallup High, Puyallup SD
Jordan Gage: Eastside Christian
Katharine Geiss: Sunrise Elementary, Kent SD
Matthew Gillingham: Redmond Middle, Lake Washington SD
Tara Gray: Clyde Hill Elementary, Bellevue SD
Jason Greer: Morris Ford Middle, Franklin Pierce SD
Anna Griebel: White Center Heights Elementary, Highline PS
Cathi Hackett: Kokanee Elementary, Northshore SD
Scott Haines: Sacajawea Middle, Federal Way PS

Juree Han: Maplewood Heights Elementary, Renton SD
Kristi Hannigan: Northshore Junior High, Northshore SD
Taylor Hansen: Washington Middle, Seattle PS
Mark Harris: Emerald Ridge High, Puyallup SD
Kari Helling: Firgrove and Woodland Elementaries, Puyallup SD
Keith Hennig: Charles A Lindbergh High, Renton SD
Elizabeth Herbert-Wasson: Broadview-Thomson K-8, Seattle PS
Heather Hiatt: Woodinville High, Northshore SD
Lorraine Hirakawa: Emerald Ridge High, Puyallup SD
Jaclynne Hobson: Lowell Elementary, Tacoma PS
Troy Holding: Highland Park Elementary, Seattle PS
Emrie Hollander: Pine Tree Elementary, Kent SD
Seth Humphrey: Graham-Kapowsin High, Bethel SD
Karen Jackson: Leschi Elementary, Seattle PS
Susan James: Auburn Riverside High, Auburn SD
Brett Joachim: Salmon Bay School (K-8), Seattle PS
John Jones: Henry Foss High, Tacoma PS
Melayne Jones: Carson Elementary, Puyallup SD
Adriana Julian: Lister Elementary, Tacoma PS
William Keith: Lyon Elementary, Tacoma PS
Joe Keller: Fife High, Fife SD
Kecia Keller: Sheridan Elementary, Tacoma PS
Samantha Ketover: Kentridge High, Kent SD
DeAnna Kilga: Lake Washington High, Lake Washington SD
Molly Klemkow: Elk Ridge Elementary, White River SD
Jennifer Kovach: Van Asselt Elementary, Seattle PS
Kerstin Kramer: Snoqualmie Elementary, Snoqualmie Valley SD
Andrea Landes: Victor Falls and Crestwood Elementaries, Sumner SD
Jeffrey Larson: Redmond High, Lake Washington SD
Leslie Lederman: Grand Ridge Elementary, Issaquah SD
Melinda Leonard: Interagency Academy, Seattle PS
Cynthia Lewis: Showalter Middle, Tukwila SD
Sandra Lindsay-Brown: Bryant Montessori School, Tacoma PS
Andrew Lohman: Fernwood Elementary, Northshore SD
Sherry Lowe: Sherwood Forest Elementary, Federal Way PS
Barbara Lynch: K-5 STEM @ Boren School, Seattle PS
Andra Maughan: Chief Sealth International High, Seattle PS
Chris McCrummen: Sequoyah Middle, Federal Way PS
Thomas McDermott: Auburn High, Auburn SD
Bonnie McKeeney: Northshore Junior High, Northshore SD
Stephanie McPhail: Kapowsin Elementary, Bethel SD
Angelo Mills: Firgrove Elementary, Puyallup SD
Sara Mirabueno: John Hay Elementary, Seattle PS
Sharon Mitchell-Guddat: Mark Twain Elementary, Federal Way PS
Amy Montgomery: Bonney Lake High, Sumner SD
Marguerite Moskat: Redmond Elementary, Lake Washington SD
Cody Mothershead: White River High, White River SD
Brandy Nelson: Elmhurst Elementary, Franklin Pierce SD
Patricia Nesbitt: Saghalie Middle, Federal Way PS
Lysandra Ness: Lakes High, Clover Park SD
Nuka Nurzhanov: Auburn High, Auburn SD
Andrew O'Connell: Whitman Middle, Seattle PS
Bernadette O'Leary: St John School, Archdiocese of Seattle
Douglas Ouellette: Catharine Blaine K-8, Seattle PS
Heidi Paul: Alexander Graham Bell Elementary, Lake Washington SD
Julia Pearson: Viewlands Elementary, Seattle PS
Heidi Peltier: Rosa Parks Elementary, Lake Washington SD
Katherine Pence: Woodmoor Elementary, Northshore SD
Miguel Perez: Federal Way High, Federal Way PS
Michelle Pickard: Issaquah Middle, Issaquah SD
Sara Pietraszewski: Woodmoor Elementary, Northshore SD
Andrew Pitman: Pope and Sunrise Elementaries, Puyallup SD
Theresa Prather: Artondale Elementary, Peninsula SD
Jamie Prescott: Mercer Island High, Mercer Island SD
Juan Price: Roosevelt High, Seattle PS
David Radford: Kent-Meridian High, Kent SD
Patricia Rangel: Denny International Middle, Seattle PS
Garth Reeves: Highline Big Picture Middle and High, Highline PS
Russell Rice: Steilacoom High, Steilacoom SD
Heidi Riegsecker: John McKnight Middle, Renton SD
Melissa Riley: Kenmore Elementary, Northshore SD

Kirsten Roberts-Hunkovic: Charles A Lindbergh High, Renton SD
Joseph Robertson: Skyview Junior High, Northshore SD
Kathryn Robinson: Narrows View Intermediate, University Place SD
Tiffany Rodriguez: Bothell High, Northshore SD
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Elena Sanchez: Maple Elementary, Seattle PS
Heather Sanchez: Ardmore Elementary, Bellevue SD
Sharon Schmitt: Mount Rainier High, Highline PS
Chris Scott: TOPS At Seward (K-8), Seattle PS
Steven Seberson: AG Hudtloff Middle, Clover Park SD
Nikki Shockley: Mount Tahoma High, Tacoma PS
Douglas Shook: Kellogg Middle, Shoreline SD
Jaclyn Shope: Steilacoom SD
Julie Shultz-Bartlett: Bethel Middle, Bethel SD
Alaina Sivadasan: Eastlake High, Lake Washington SD
Christina Spencer: Decatur High, Federal Way PS
James St George: John R. Rogers High, Puyallup SD
Liliya Stefoglo: Endeavour Elementary, Issaquah SD
Treena Sterk: Cascade Parent Partnership Program, Seattle PS
Tara Stone: Islander Middle, Mercer Island SD
Julie Sturman-Cox: Catharine Blaine K-8, Seattle PS
Steven Thatcher: Eastlake High, Lake Washington SD
Maija Thiel: Emerald Ridge High, Puyallup SD
JoAnn Todd-Waller: Northshore SD
Lisa Truemper: Issaquah Middle, Issaquah SD
Leslie Vincent: Bellevue SD
Michael Vincent: Woodbrook Middle, Clover Park SD
Sahnica Washington: Roxhill Elementary, Seattle PS
Mindy Watson: Donald Eismann Elementary, Sumner SD
Kim Wiersum: Redmond Elementary, Lake Washington SD
Rebecca Williams: Parkside Elementary, Highline PS
Sarita Williams-Newell: Meeker Elementary, Puyallup SD
Lisa Wilson: Sierra Heights Elementary, Renton SD
Janet Wojtala: Aylen Junior High, Puyallup SD
Stacey Wright: APP @ Lincoln Elementary, Seattle PS
Miriam Yovetich: Seattle PS
Albert Zantua: Chief Leschi Middle/High, Chief Leschi Schools

ESD 123

Angela Baldus: Highland Elementary, Clarkston SD
Gary Bradley: Hanford High, Richland SD
Lorraine Cooper: Kennewick SD
Jonn Covell: Othello High, Othello SD
Matthew Ellis: Pasco High, Pasco SD
Mikelanne Ellis: Longfellow/Emerson Elementaries, Pasco SD
Sarah Flynn: Pasco High, Pasco SD
Randy Hoover: Kennewick High, Kennewick SD
Tammy Hutchison: Horse Heaven Hills Middle, Kennewick SD
Brendan Johnson: Clarkston High, Clarkston SD
Carli McGarrah: Mark Twain Elementary, Pasco SD
Lisa McKinney: Tri-Tech Skills Center, Kennewick SD
James Perry: Kiona-Benton City Elementary, Kiona-Benton City SD
Kristina Rawlins: Enterprise Middle, Richland SD
Jenny Rodriguez: Delta High, Pasco SD
Deanne Ruddell: Lincoln Middle, Clarkston SD
Brooke Schuldheisz: Westgate Elementary, Kennewick SD
Jerry Uhling: Asotin Jr/Sr High, Asotin-Anatone SD
Esmeralda Villarreal: Lutacaga and Wahitis Elementaries, Othello SD

ESD 171

Taunya Brown: Orchard Middle, Wenatchee SD
Brandon Byers: Grand Coulee Dam Middle, Grand Coulee Dam SD
Jeremy Clark: Tonasket Elementary, Tonasket SD
Michele Cram: Warden SD
Marcia Hershaw: Monument Elementary, Quincy SD
Mike Hull: Pateros School, Pateros SD
Michael Janski: Icicle River Middle, Cascade SD
Tabatha Mires: Waterville Middle/High, Waterville SD
Scott Monson: Columbia Ridge Elementary, Ephrata SD

Cora Nordby: Mansfield SD
Derek O'Konek: Sage Point Elementary, Moses Lake SD
Robert Rainville: Chelan High, Lake Chelan SD
Shelby Robins: Bridgeport Elementary, Bridgeport SD
Cheri Ward: Park Orchard Elementary, Moses Lake SD
Joanne Warren: Omak High, Omak SD
Scott West: Warden Elementary, Warden SD
Lance Young: Orondo Elementary & Middle School, Orondo SD

ESD 189

Jennifer Allen: Big Lake Elementary, Sedro-Woolley SD
Cherae Almanza: Stanwood Middle, Stanwood-Camano SD
Linda Anderson: Harmony Elementary, Mount Baker SD
Terry Anderson: Cascade Elementary, Marysville SD
Cecilie Cappel: Cavelero Mid High, Lake Stevens SD
Crosby Carpenter: Granite Falls High, Granite Falls SD
Lisa Condran: Lincoln Elementary, Mount Vernon SD
Michael Couto: Blaine High, Blaine SD
Anthony Craig: Quil Ceda-Tulalip Elementary, Marysville SD
Chad Duskin: Arlington High, Arlington PS
Tammie Duskin: Haller Middle, Arlington PS
Kimberly Erickson: Jefferson Elementary, Everett PS
Analisa Ficklin: Wade King Elementary, Bellingham PS
Kecia Fox: Anacortes Middle, Anacortes SD
Ian Freeman: Everett High, Everett PS
Christopher Fulford: Lynndale Elementary, Edmonds SD
Jeanette Grisham: Cedarhome Elementary, Stanwood-Camano SD
Lawrence Groesbeck: Chase Lake Elementary, Edmonds SD
Brett Hagen: Sherwood Elementary, Edmonds SD
Milicent Hanna: Olivia Park Elementary, Mukilteo SD
Jennifer Harlan: Stanwood Middle, Stanwood-Camano SD
Erik Heinz: Arlington High, Arlington PS
Katy Kayler: Spruce Elementary, Edmonds SD
Cheryl Larsen: Penny Creek Elementary, Everett PS
Daniel Lee: Explorer Middle, Mukilteo SD
Grace Manning: Cedarcrest Middle, Marysville SD
Todd Mathews: Harmony Elementary, Mount Baker SD
Ron Moag: Lake Stevens High, Lake Stevens SD
Rhonda Moore: Sunnyside Elementary, Marysville SD
Joseph Mutcheson: Glacier Peak High, Snohomish SD
Daniel Natividad: Totem Middle, Marysville SD
Enielle Nelson: Marysville Middle, Marysville SD
Tessa O'Connor: Cascade View Elementary, Snohomish SD
Celia O'Connor-Weaver: Hawthorne Elementary, Everett PS
Tarra Patrick: Everett High, Everett PS
David Pfeiffer: South Whidbey Academy, South Whidbey SD
Michael Piper: Brier Terrace Middle, Edmonds SD
Doug Plucker: Granite Falls High, Granite Falls SD
Anne Purdy: Little Cedars Elementary, Snohomish SD
Leandra Reuble: Oak Harbor High, Oak Harbor SD
David Riddle: LaVenture Middle, Mount Vernon SD
Steve Schmutz: Archbishop Murphy High
Paula Seaman: Hillcrest Elementary, Oak Harbor SD
Kelly Sheward: Marshall Elementary, Marysville SD
Denise Smith: Shoultes Elementary, Marysville SD
Carolyn Sytsma: Irene Reither Primary/Ten Mile Creek Elementary, Meridian SD
Joseph Vaule: Seattle Hill Elementary, Snohomish SD

No ESD Affiliation

Marge Chow: City University of Seattle, City University
Tracy Flynn
Wilma Killian-Champion
Larry Lashway: OSP
Denise Lawless: Gary Manuel Aveda Institute
Ann O'Doherty: University of Washington-Danforth
William Prenevost: School of Education, Seattle Pacific University
John Sebastian
Donna Shively: Metro Dehli International School, (Private)
Patti Smith: DreamBox Learning

Grading Schools

Why Stop There?

Reducing public school performance to a letter grade is dangerously simplistic. What if we approached other institutions that way—hospitals, police forces, churches. Or, say, the Legislature?

By Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

Every year in Olympia, a few bills are dropped (a strange term synonymous with introduced, but one you would use instead to sound hip) which on their face are so silly and defy common sense that you wouldn't think they would get legs (another term that hip people in Olympia use to indicate that a bill is so popular can reach the House or Senate floor for a vote by simply walking there).

Of course each year a few of these bills actually do get legs. One of those bills this year is SB 5328, which would create a school grading system of A–F based on the Accountability Index. This would take what is arguably the most complex endeavor in our society—public education—and reduce a school's effectiveness down to one of five letter grades.

I only get one page for this column, so I'm not going to lay out the obvious flaws to this proposal. Rather, let's keep the sentiment going. If simplifying effectiveness of schools to a single letter grade is a good idea, why not other institutions such as hospitals, police forces, churches—and my favorite, the Legislature?

As we contemplate the formula for legislators, here might be a starting point:

- Their score on the very state tests that they expect students to pass in order to graduate from high school
- The number of times they read email during hearings when they should be listening
- The number of bills they pass vs. the number of bills they introduce
- The percentage of votes cast for them as a factor of dollars spent on their campaigns.

Let's not forget that all scores would be required to be displayed on legislative websites.

Of course this formula sounds silly. But so does reducing all that is expected of schools today down to one letter grade based on the Accountability Index which is based primarily on state test results.

What wouldn't be included in the grade that parents care about? Such things as:

- Strong music and art programs
- Students' sense of self-worth and hope upon graduation
- Students' ability to use the technology that employers expect

- Students' commitment to a healthy lifestyle
- Students ability to collaborate and solve complex problems
- Students ownership of their own learning
- Students' commitment to sticking with tough issues until they are resolved.

Because our schools are funded with public money, it makes sense that we gauge their effectiveness. A letter grade, however, is too simplistic. A single measurement can't possibly sum up the complex structure of today's public schools. Instead, many factors should be taken into account.

Even if we did derive a way to present this information within a letter grade, what public good would it serve? How does it help students to learn if they walk into a school building every day that is branded with anything less than an A?

Intelligent consumers deserve more than a letter grade. ■



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



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