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Association of Washington School Principals

SPRING 2014



## Hope

**INSIDE** School Success Stories

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## FEATURE SECTION

# Hope

Research supports the idea that students who have hope perform better in school and develop higher self-esteem. This issue features articles from principals and upcoming AWSP/WASA Summer Conference keynote speakers on ways to foster hope in the lives of your students and staff. You'll also find a special section on school success stories that highlights achievements—both large and small—of schools across the state.

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*Submitted by various school districts*

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**Cover photo:** Principal Shannon McKinney of Seattle's K-5 STEM at Boren School talks numbers with a kindergarten student. Read her article about STEM and the whole child on page 28.

Photo by Chris Tumbusch

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1021 8th Ave. SE  
 Olympia, WA 98501-1500  
 360.357.7951 • www.awsp.org

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 National Association of Secondary School Principals

# Be Someone's Hope

**By Caroline Brumfield**

*Managing Editor*

A little while back, I met a woman named Hope. She was the first person named Hope I had ever met, and she had exactly the attitude and personality you would expect from someone with that name.

Hope and I have a mutual friend who was going on a two-week vacation to Cabo and needed someone to watch her poodle while she was away. Our friend arranged it so that Hope would watch the dog the first week and I would watch the dog the second week, "trading off" the poodle in the middle of the vacation period.

My week to dog-sit happened to be a particularly busy and stressful one for me. Somewhere in the midst of the madness, I forgot all about picking up the dog from Hope.

When Hope kindly called to remind me that it was my turn to watch the poodle, I panicked a little on the inside – partly because I couldn't believe I had forgotten, and partly because it was just one more responsibility to add to an already stressful week.

However, my stress soon melted away as I continued chatting with Hope. Her attitude was positive and her voice was bright and bubbly. I learned that she had four young children, two dogs, two cats, and a myriad of home, school and church responsibilities. She kept a sense of humor about her in spite of her hectic schedule. She seemed to have no qualms about taking on another pet; she even offered to watch our friend's dog for a couple extra days if we needed her to.

I, on the other hand, have only one small child and two even smaller dogs, yet I was the one stressing. Talking with Hope helped me put things in perspective.

Before hanging up the phone, Hope said something that stood out to me: "I'm sure it will all work out." That phrase left me feeling reassured and positive for the rest of the day.

We can't all be named Hope (for obvious reasons), but we can all be someone's "Hope." A quick chat with someone who held a positive outlook was enough to change my attitude; imagine the influence you have on your staff and students on a daily basis!

In a world where hope can be hard to come by, we can all stand to show a little more of it. Guaranteed, your hopeful attitude will improve someone's day – perhaps even your own. ■



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

## AWSP Welcomes Vicki Bates to the Team



Vicki Bates will be joining the AWSP team this summer as the Director of Principal Support and Middle Level Programs. Vicki is currently the Executive Director of Standards-based Instruction in Kent School District.

Vicki's position at AWSP will encompass the current responsibilities of

Don Rash (Director of Middle Level Programs) and Sharon Green (Director of Diversity Initiatives), who are both retiring in August. While Don and Sharon will be greatly missed, we are excited to have Vicki coming aboard.

Vicki has spent 29 years in education as a middle school teacher, staff developer, principal, and central office administrator. She began her career teaching math at Curtis Junior High in University Place School District. Vicki

began her administrative work as an assistant principal at Kent-Meridian High School in Kent, before moving to Central Kitsap School District to serve as principal at Olympic High School. Vicki returned to Kent, going on to serve as an elementary principal at Horizon Elementary, as Director of Instructional Technology at the district office, and most recently, Executive Director of Standards-based Instruction.

Vicki earned her bachelor's degree in mathematics education at the University of Puget Sound and her master's degree in educational administration from Western Washington University. Vicki and her husband, Jerry, live in Auburn with two middle school boys and Lucy the (princess) dog.

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

## Washington State Principals of the Year

Congratulations to the 2014 Washington State Principals of the Year!



**Elementary  
Principal of the  
Year**

**Chris Pearson**

West View School,  
Burlington-Edison  
SD



**Middle Level  
Principal of the  
Year**

**Keisha Scarlett**

South Shore PK-8  
School, Seattle PS



**High School  
Principal of the  
Year**

**Keven Wynkoop**

Ballard High,  
Seattle PS

Watch for articles about each of the three winners in the fall 2014 issue of Washington Principal. Learn more about each of the winners at [www.awsp.org/pressreleases](http://www.awsp.org/pressreleases).

## Robert J. Handy Award Winners

Congratulations to the 2014 Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Award winners. All three happen to be AWSP members this year!



**Aaron Fletcher,**  
Principal  
Liberty High,  
Liberty School  
District



**Linda Masteller,**  
Principal  
Bonney Lake  
High, Sumner  
School District



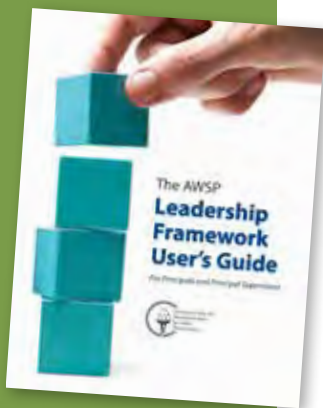
**Kristen Sheridan,**  
Principal  
Sand Hill Elemen-  
tary, North Mason  
School District

Established in 2002, the Robert J. Handy Awards are sponsored jointly by PEMCO, the School Employees Credit Union, and the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA). The awards recognize outstanding Washington public school administrators.



## The AWSP Leadership Framework User's Guide is Out!

All principals, assistant principals and superintendents should have received a printed copy of the AWSP Leadership Framework User's Guide from us at the beginning of May.



The User's Guide was created by professionals in the field to support principals and their evaluators as they implement the new principal evaluation expectations in Washington state.

Our goal for the AWSP Leadership Framework is that it be used first and foremost as a foundation for principals' professional growth and development. We knew that in order to ensure that the Framework is used in this way, a resource like the User's Guide would need to accompany it.

AWSP members can access a PDF of the User's Guide at [www.awsp.org/usersguide](http://www.awsp.org/usersguide). We have also created an iBook of the User's Guide that will be available for purchase from Apple's iBooks Store, which can be accessed on an iPad or any Apple computer with iBooks installed. The iBook contains videos and other resources that will enhance the User's Guide experience.

If you have questions about the Guide, or if you didn't receive a printed copy from us and would like one, please give us a call at 800.562.6100.

## Save the Date for the 2014 Washington Educators' Conference!

The second annual Washington Educators' Conference, hosted by WASA, AWSP, OSPI, and WSASCD, will be held **October 27–28** at the **DoubleTree Hotel Seattle Airport**.

This two-day event is for all educators in Washington state—superintendents, central office administrators, principals, assistant principals, other district-level administrators, teachers, and teacher-leaders.

### New Heights and Challenges

Continuing our focus on implementing reforms, the conference theme is *"Helping Educators Navigate New Heights and Challenges."* Hot education issues in Washington will be highlighted by national

keynote speakers and in best-practice concurrent sessions.

### Registration

Registration opens July 16, 2014. Watch for details at [www.awsp.org/WEC](http://www.awsp.org/WEC).



## Did you know...?

Legal support on job-related matters is a key benefit of AWSP membership, available only to Active members. Active membership in AWSP also includes **\$2 million** in liability insurance through NAESP or NASSP.

# APPYHour

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



**Tweetbot 3 for iPhone:** Transform your Twitter experience with Tweetbot 3. A staff and tech expert favorite, Tweetbot can fetch tweets in the background, works great with Twitter lists, live streams tweets over wifi (no need to refresh feeds), allows you to save tweets and links to great services like Pocket and Instapaper, and can use iCloud to sync your timeline across devices. Tweetbot also features a powerful mute feature, allowing you to temporarily filter out users or hashtags. **Available for:** iOS, \$4.99 (Tweetbot 3 available for iPhone/iPod touch now, coming soon for iPad).



**Mailbox:** Do you have a Gmail or iCloud email account? If so, use Mailbox to put your email in its place. Mailbox describes itself as "modern tech for an ancient medium" and lets you deal with email in a new way. Short swipes right will archive messages, long swipes right will delete messages, but the cool things happen when you swipe left. Short swipes left will allow you to snooze your message, hiding it until a time you select (e.g., this evening, this weekend, next month, or a time you select). Long swipes left let you quickly file your message into standard and custom lists (e.g., To Read, To Buy, Receipts). Mailbox can help keep your inbox clean and clutter-free. **Available for:** iOS



**Class Messenger:** Class Messenger is a private messaging service that keeps teachers, parents and students in sync. It's the best of things you use today (Twitter, email, text, Instagram, blogs) simplified into a service that takes 10 seconds to use. Teachers use the mobile app and website to create quick, short-form messages in categories like Homework, Reminders, Surveys, Meeting Requests and more. Parents and students get their messages from the app, website, email, push notifications or even text messages if they prefer. It's private, two-way, and direct, and ensures that everyone stays informed. **Available for:** iOS, Android, Web



**Sketch:** Sketch is an Evernote product that will help you get your point across with fewer words using annotation, shapes and sketches, so that your ideas become reality faster. Annotate PDFs, screenshots, and photos quickly and easily. Add text, highlight existing text, pixelate sensitive information, and call attention to anything. **Available for:** iOS, Android, Windows, Mac OS X

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# ASK A PRINCIPAL

## What Would You Invent?

*We asked our members, "If you could invent one thing to make your job a little bit easier, what would it be?" Here are some of the responses:*

“ We have a decent video surveillance system at our school, but I still spend a significant amount of time looking for vaguely-described people or incidents. 'You know, that kid with that blue and black backpack?' Or, 'I'm not sure what time it was. Was it after second period? No, after third period maybe?' I would invent a mechanism for searching through the video archives for 'blue and black backpack' to limit the amount of time spent staring at video of goofy kids, although I have learned some new dance moves while looking for something else!

**Marilyn Boerke, Principal**  
*Liberty Middle, Camas SD*

“ Easy, a principal replicator. Three of me would still be busy!

**Donna Hudson, Principal**  
*Greywolf Elementary, Sequim SD*

“ A magical potion that when taken would compel staff to identify two possible solutions for every problem/complaint verbalized.

**Chris Turner, Assistant Principal**  
*Franklin Pierce High, Franklin Pierce SD*

“ An app that filters through email, reads my mind, responds to the messages that need a response, forwards and delegates those that need forwarded, and deletes the junk mail. How did we communicate before email?

**Joshua Meek, Principal**  
*Moses Lake High, Moses Lake SD*



# HOPE: *My Daily Inspiration*

**By Karen Owen**

*Principal, Nisqually Middle School  
North Thurston PS*

**I feel most** renewed and energized when I know and feel in my heart that there is hope. I am certain research supports that living in a world of hope provides the motivation for endless ideas and opportunities. I am grateful to be the principal of a middle school where I see hope every day.

I have hope in my staff and am truly inspired by their caring and compassionate work to support our students in every way. At a time in the school year that is often challenging, my spirit is renewed when I enjoy the opportunity to strategize, brainstorm and learn with other members of my staff. Recently we began an intense plan of work around our reading outcomes. Over the years, we have seen a noticeable downward turn in our students' skills as readers. Rather than agonizing over the data or making excuses, these outstanding educators have chosen to immediately embrace a comprehensive plan.

As principal, I am charged with creating a system for the work to begin, asking questions to provoke thinking, removing any barriers, and continually communicating about the plan. This team has that synergy which envisioned and orchestrated the process—from the point of understanding the issue to developing the actions—to truly improve our

students' skills. Their plan included long- and short-term goals that provide for staff professional development, intermittent testing protocols,

“ I have hope in my staff and am truly inspired by their caring and compassionate work to support our students in every way.

and an added layer of outcomes and accountability involving the administration during classroom walk-throughs. I know that we do—and will continue to—make a difference for our community's future through this work now with our students.

In addition to my staff, I have endless hope in our students. Every student matters to me and I constantly strive to model that. Sometimes students and their families need to be reminded of that hope, especially in times of adversity. The other day, I had a student in my office with his mother and grandmother discussing this

student's choice to skip his afternoon classes for the last couple of days. In this case, the student was straddling the fence on doing the right thing and doing whatever felt good at the time. After an insightful conversation with the student and family, it was clear that we had to help the student keep both feet grounded in the right choice. I needed him to see that he could choose to be the person that his family and I saw in him and that we would be here to help him. I needed him to believe in himself and to share the same hope for his future that I have.

Hope truly is all around us and we need to take notice, pause, lean in, acknowledge and reflect upon it. As a middle school principal, I am so grateful to be in a district and school where the hope is endless and inspiration is all around me. ■



*Karen Owen has served as principal at Nisqually Middle School for more than 10 years. A longtime AWSP member, she is serving as president this year.*

If there was a recipe for student, teacher and administrator success, what would it be? The following four articles, written by the keynote speakers of the upcoming AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, provide “ingredients” to help answer that question. Hear more from each of the authors June 29-July 1, 2014, at the Spokane Convention Center. Learn more at [www.awsp.org/summerconference](http://www.awsp.org/summerconference).

# Leading with Hope



**By Dr. Shane J. Lopez**

*Research Director, Clifton Strengths Institute*

*Senior Scientist, Gallup*

*Professor of the Practice, University of Kansas School of Business*

## *Followers need hope.*

There it is. I just summed up the last century’s worth of scholarly works on leadership in three words. They are worth repeating. *Followers need hope.* Of course, there are some caveats to that statement. I will address one of them right here: Followers have other needs that they look to leaders to meet. Gallup discovered followers’ need for hope and other intangibles when it asked people to identify the most influential leaders in their lives. Here, play along with the nation by answering the following question:

*What leader has the most positive influence in your daily life? Take a few moments to think about this question if you need to. Once you have someone in mind, please list his or her initials.*

---

*Now, please list three words that best describe what this person contributes to your life.*

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---

A random sample of more than 10,000 people shared their thoughts during telephone interviews. Through the

hard work and insight of a Gallup research team, each word describing a leader was compared and contrasted with other responses. Ultimately, the coding process rendered clear results about the needs of followers. Then the 25 most frequently mentioned words were studied carefully. Surprisingly,

Even leaders of large groups of people spend more time reacting to problems than initiating a better future.

Types of responses did not differ by type of leader. So, a principal is not less on the hook for providing trust than a spiritual leader. A CEO is no less



Leaders don’t necessarily have the budget or staffing that they need or want, but they do have infinite resources—hopeful thinking—in every one of their followers.

words we often associate with leadership, such as wisdom or humility, were nowhere near the top of the list.

Followers, whether referencing spiritual leaders, great leaders from the past, good bosses, or today’s community leaders, say they want the people they serve to meet four psychological needs: compassion, stability, trust, and hope. In return, followers give their commitment, creativity, mutual trust, and engagement.

A leader’s hope is especially valuable to followers during tough times. Gallup research, however, suggests that the vast majority of leaders do not spend enough time on making hope happen.

responsible for giving love to followers than a parent. And political leaders are as responsible as other leaders for meeting the hope needs of their followers.

By studying hopeful leaders and talking to their followers, I found that people who want to spread hope and motivate followers need to practice these three tactics:

- Create and sustain excitement about the future.
- Knock down existing obstacles to goals and don’t put up new ones.
- Reestablish goals—re-goal—when the circumstances demand it.

Leaders don't necessarily have the budget or staffing that they need or want, but they do have infinite resources—hopeful thinking—in every one of their followers. Followers look to leaders to capitalize on the spirit and ideas of the times, to dream big, and to motivate them toward a meaningful future.

## Creating Excitement about the Future

When people have a boss who makes them feel hopeful about the future, they are more committed to their jobs. Specifically, when Gallup asked followers whether their leader at work (typically a manager) made them enthusiastic about the future, of those who said yes, 69% were engaged in their work, scoring high on a measure of involvement in and excitement about work. These engaged workers are the products of hopeful leadership. They are more innovative and productive than others, and they are more likely to be with the company for the long haul.

Of those followers who said their leader did not make them enthusiastic about the future, a mere 1% were committed and energized at work. These disengaged workers are a threat to business, coworkers, and themselves. They not only fail to make meaningful contributions, they undermine the hard work of others, and they are more likely to be physically and mentally unhealthy than their coworkers. And, for good and bad, it is somewhat likely that they won't be with the company one year later.

What can you do to make your staff wildly excited about the future? Ask them to find out.

## Knocking Down Obstacles

Leaders lose influence when they make our lives harder. Whether it is a small town high school principal adding extra obstacles to graduation, or a politician creating more red tape in the

way of getting what you need, we don't respond well to hope killers.

Hopeful leaders make our lives better and easier. With instrumental support (a helpful hand in a time of need), influential leaders knock down obstacles to goals, giving followers their best shot at doing what they do best. Fairness and balance also come in here, because getting rid of some obstacles can create new bumps in the road for someone else.

For leaders who are willing and able to put themselves in the shoes of their followers, knocking down obstacles is one of the quickest ways to build hope. Unfortunately, too many leaders distance themselves—their followers tell you they “don't have a clue.” How many high school counselors, bankers, and college financial aid counselors have recently completed the Free Application for Federal Student Aid that paves the way for many students to attend college?

What's one obstacle to teaching and learning you can knock down? Can you eliminate it today?

## Regoaling

A leader's greatest challenge is regoaling, which reclaims willpower from the pursuit of unattainable goals. Regoaling requires you to change course after days, months, or years of convincing others that you were on the right path and then realizing that you weren't.

Regoaling is where hope meets courage. Leading with hope is easy when the odds are in our favor or when we can recruit a team and develop a plan that can help us beat the odds. It is a different matter when the odds are truly insurmountable. In the face of such odds, some leaders engage in conspiracy and silence, deluding them-

selves and others about what might happen, while they cling to goals that are no longer viable or realistic. Other leaders—the ones we want in our lives—guide us toward choices that balance our rational and emotional interests. They are at their best in the worst of times.

Hopeful leaders rise to the occasion when they are needed most. They are straight shooters whose honesty creates trust and helps us build a new version of tomorrow. So what goals do you need to let go of now to make your school's future better?

## Spreading Hope

No matter how high it is, our individual hope sometimes gets bottled up by powerful personal or social forces. That is when we most need hopeful leaders. Their hope becomes a public resource for tackling the problems we face.



Hopeful leaders rise to the occasion when they are needed most.

When we are at our lowest point at work or school or in our personal lives, hope is a

force multiplier. It can turn even a tiny amount of energy into mojo for the future. Nothing good happens when we are demoralized. The leaders that care about us most know this. That's why they work so hard to give us a glimmer of what's possible. And that is why people follow them. ■

Adapted from Dr. Shane Lopez's book, *Making Hope Happen*.

*Dr. Shane Lopez will speak at the 2014 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, June 29 – July 1, in Spokane. Learn more at [www.awsp.org/summerconference](http://www.awsp.org/summerconference).*



# A Closer Look at the Common Core State Standards



**By Dr. David Conley**

*Director, Center for Educational  
Policy Research*

*The following is an excerpt from Chapter 7 of Dr. Conley's book, Getting Ready for College, Careers, and the Common Core: What Every Educator Needs to Know. Read the full excerpt at [www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal](http://www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal).*

**Why does the US** education system need a set of common core academic standards in English language arts and mathematics? How did the Common Core State Standards come into being? For most educators, the creation and existence of these standards came as something of a surprise, in part because they were developed so quickly and without the usual opportunity for multiple reviews and revisions, as has been the tradition in state standards development processes. Yet the general sentiment seems to be that the Common Core State Standards, however created, can be a useful tool to help improve teaching and learning nationwide and that they are likely to be influential in the states that adopt and implement them.

This chapter focuses on a deeper understanding of the Common Core State Standards for several reasons. Knowing something about the rationale for their existence helps ensure the implementation process will be consistent with the overall purpose and intent of the standards. These



Knowing something about the rationale for their existence helps ensure the implementation process will be consistent with the overall purpose and intent of the standards.

standards were designed to address a need and achieve a goal. Understanding the need and goal leads to implementation that goes beyond mechanical compliance and results in changes the standards were intended to achieve in the first place. To do so requires an understanding of the process by which they were developed, the organization and structure of each subject area, an examination of what they omit as well as what they include, and a consideration of issues that will arise in the implementation process. This chapter is not intended to be a substitute for the type of general overview of the standards available on the Common Core website and from many organizations. Instead, it is an opportunity to delve a little deeper into where they came from, what they are, how they tick, and what they don't do.

I am neither an unqualified cheerleader for nor a harsh critic of the Common Core State Standards. Given my experience developing college readiness standards, I understand the purpose and value of high, appropriate expectations for all students, particularly when those expectations

progress toward the tangible goal of college and career readiness. I should note that I served as the cochair of the Validation Committee for the Common Core State Standards, an ad hoc group convened by the two organizations that sponsored the development of the standards. The committee's charge was to review the standards to determine if they were valid learning targets and if they were developed in ways consistent with best practices in standards development. (I should also note that I authored a supplement to the introduction to the English Language Arts and Mathematics Common Core State Standards that is designed to address some of the limitations in the original introduction that I discuss later in this chapter.) However, this chapter and the following one are not necessarily solely a review or critique of the standards. In these chapters, I adopt both descriptive and analytical perspectives to shine a light on the Common Core from a slightly different vantage point than offered by many reviewers: the usefulness of the standards as a means to improve college and career readiness for all students.

I hope the change in tone from descriptive to analytical, when it occurs, is not jarring and that it is clear when I am being descriptive and when I am being analytical. In places where I offer constructive criticism of the standards, I do so from the perspective that they can be made better and not from the point of view that they are fatally flawed. Pointing out limitations and ways to improve them is not the same as saying they can't or won't make a useful contribution to educational improvement in the United States.

## The Heart of the Challenge of Teaching the Common Core State Standards

The New York State Education Department contains a summary of the key shifts that need to occur in teaching practices for the Common Core State Standards to be implemented successfully. This list can be found on other sites as well, but on this site it is accompanied by a range of other useful resources ([www.engageny.org](http://www.engageny.org)). In the ELA/Literacy area, the following changes define the differences between much of current practice and the Common Core:

- **Teachers will need to balance their teaching of literary texts with informational texts.** This is a frequently misunderstood topic, one that is discussed in more detail in the following chapter. The major challenge of this shift is that no one has the responsibility and few have the training to teach how to read information texts currently.
- **Students will need to build knowledge of their subject areas through text more than through teacher presentation or activities.** Students will be expected to engage in texts more deeply and in ways that are more central to learning the subject matter. This increased emphasis on complex texts that are central to success in the course will increase the expectation that

all students are competent readers and will value reading as a skill in place of workarounds that allowed students to complete courses without ever really reading a key text carefully and completely.

- **The progression of text complexity will become more explicit and systematic.** Teachers will spend more time for students to engage in close reading of key texts, and reading skills will continue to be developed across all grade levels, not only at the primary level.
- **Students will learn to use evidence from texts systematically to support and illustrate their arguments and responses to key questions.** In the process, students will improve their logical thinking skills, but they will also need to master more techniques for analyzing texts, identifying key passages, and properly citing or paraphrasing them. This means that advocacy or unsupported opinion-based responses will not be as acceptable as they are now in many classrooms.
- **Students will develop, use, and retain a much broader academic vocabulary.** Teachers will need to introduce specific vocabulary associated with academic learning and then use those words in meaningful ways and not attempt to teach them through word lists. This topic is also taken up in more detail in the next chapter.

In mathematics as well, the focus of teaching and learning will need to change in important ways that will be challenging to teachers and students alike. Here are some key shifts:

“ I am neither an unqualified cheerleader for nor a harsh critic of the Common Core State Standards.

This means students will need to think about and use mathematical concepts and techniques in a wider variety of ways so that they understand them more deeply and retain them better.

- **Mathematics instruction will need to focus to a much greater degree on concepts and content prioritized in the standards.** This means students will need to think about and use mathematical concepts and techniques in a wider variety of ways so that they understand them more deeply and retain them better.
- **As in ELA/Literacy, mathematics instruction will be built on progressions of knowledge that extend and connect across grade levels.** In many cases, this will require teachers to incorporate content and skills learned at previous levels so that students recall and strengthen their mastery of that material as they learn new concepts that build on the prior material.
- **For some mathematical skills, students need to reach the level of fluency and automaticity in their ability to calculate or apply the technique.** Many fundamental skills have to be understood well enough and practiced long enough so that students do not need to think when they apply the technique. While this does not apply to all content learned, it is critical for a set of foundational mathematical knowledge and skills, much of which is introduced at the intermediary and middle school levels.
- **Students will need to understand deeply the foundational mathematical knowledge they are taught at each grade level.** This will involve new ways of explaining material and more interaction, use, and application of key knowledge. Teachers will be challenged to

*Continued on page 14*

understand the mathematics they are teaching and be able to explain the whys along with the hows of lessons.

- **The mathematics in the Common Core is designed to be applied in a wide variety of settings and situations, most of them outside the mathematics classroom.** This

is how deeper learning comes about: by transferring what is learned in one setting to a new and novel setting. Accomplishing this will require the application of mathematical knowledge in the sciences, career technical education, and social studies, at a minimum, as well as other subject areas where it is feasible to do so.

- **Students will be expected to practice and understand in equal measure.** Rather than empha-

“ Success in the twenty-first century requires much more than content knowledge alone.

sizing one at the expense of the other, mathematics lessons will be designed to seek a better balance between the two, enabling students to know why they are doing what they are doing but also to have sufficient opportunity to practice concepts and techniques in a range of settings that build the ability to transfer knowledge to new contexts.

The heart of the Common Core challenge and two of the key ways in which this set of standards is different from almost all previous state standards is that they represent progressions of knowledge, not just grade-level expectation, and that their

implementation will require greater collaboration among teachers. Success in the twenty-first century requires much more than content knowledge alone. As today's young people enter postsecondary education and pursue career pathways, they will need to draw from and apply literacy and numeracy knowledge and skills across a much wider range of new situations and for more varied purposes than was required of those entering college and the workplace even a generation or two ago. ■

*Dr. David Conley will speak at the 2014 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, June 29 – July 1, in Spokane. Learn more at [www.awsp.org/summerconference](http://www.awsp.org/summerconference).*

*From Conley, D. T. (2014). Getting Ready for College, Careers, and the Common Core: What Every Educator Needs to Know. Jossey-Bass: San Francisco, CA. Reprinted with permission.*

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**Dr. Adolph Brown**, Wellness International, LLC

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# Dead Presidents and Whales

## *Engaging Students with Nonfiction Texts*



**By Donalyn Miller**

Author of *The Book Whisperer*

**Open-minded** about books and willing to read almost anything, one of my sixth-grade students, Ashley, typically read four or five books a week. By early spring, she had read over a hundred books. Looking in her reader's notebook during a reading conference, it was clear that Ashley avoided reading nonfiction books, though. She had not read much self-selected nonfiction all year. Recognizing this deficit as an opportunity for Ashley to stretch herself as a reader, I suggested that we look for a few nonfiction books she might like to read.

"I hate nonfiction, Mrs. Miller. It's so boring. It's all about dead presidents and whales," she said.

Trying not to laugh, I asked, "Why do you say that, Ashley?"

"The only time you need a nonfiction book is when you are researching a report. I don't like to read those books for fun," Ashley admitted.

When several students at Ashley's table expressed similar disinterest in reading nonfiction, it surprised me. My experiences raising daughters led me to believe that most children thoroughly enjoyed nonfiction. During the "Why?" years of early childhood, preschool and primary age children love to read nonfiction texts, begging to read science-related books like Gail

Gibbon's *The Moon Book* and Steve Jenkins' *Actual Size* or David Adler's Picture Book Biography series. When I mentioned these titles to Ashley and her classmates, they remember reading and enjoying similar titles when they were younger, but they didn't like to

read trade nonfiction. Language arts teachers—who share and provide more of students' reading material at school—focus on their own content demands and read less nonfiction with students, too. In the past, we only expected students to read nonfiction

“ I hate nonfiction, Mrs. Miller. It's so boring. It's all about dead presidents and whales,” she said.

Trying not to laugh, I asked, “Why do you say that, Ashley?”

read about science or history anymore. What changed as my students grew older?

The ability to read and extract information from nonfiction becomes increasingly important to a student's academic success as the student progresses through school (Duke, 2004). Unfortunately, many children fail to acquire strong nonfiction reading skills at the same time they are expected to become better readers of nonfiction. In our Information Age, students must become strong readers and evaluators of nonfiction texts both online and offline (Moss, 2003).

Pressured to teach overstuffed content in shorter class periods, content area teachers may depend more on textbooks to deliver information and find fewer opportunities for students to

for class work when assigning research reports—Ashley's dead presidents and whales. Increasingly, we encourage students to conduct research online and cut short reading nonfiction trade books at all.

Without much exposure, access, or experience reading nonfiction in their classes, it's not surprising that older students read fewer nonfiction books. As with any type of text, we must look for meaningful ways to incorporate nonfiction texts into our daily instruction if we want our students to read more of it.

The quality and diversity of children's nonfiction has improved dramatically over the years. Nonfiction books include more features like color photographs, illustrations, glossa-

*Continued on page 16*

ries, and captions, which support and engage young readers. Students can find nonfiction books about topics that interest them like athletes, artists, musicians, arts and crafts, cars, fashion, and animals. Moving away from mass-produced library sets churned out by commissioned writers, children's publishers regularly offer well-written and researched nonfiction from outstanding nonfiction authors like Candace Fleming, Sy Montgomery, Nic Bishop, Jim Murphy, and Russell Freedman, who understand their audience and know how to engage children.



Success in the twenty-first century requires much more than content knowledge alone.

students' background knowledge and provides engaging opportunities to explore content. Ask your school librarian for nonfiction materials that align with upcoming units of study.

**Look for low-risk, easy ways to weave more nonfiction reading into your daily routine.** My students enjoy fact and trivia books like *Every*

*Day on Earth* by Steve Murrie and *100 Most Awesome Things on the Planet* by Anna Claybourne. It's easy to read a few facts each day while you are waiting in line or during class transitions. When choosing longer read-alouds, I alternate novel selections with nonfiction books.

#### **Use nonfiction as mentor texts.**

While nonfiction texts provide students with authentic models for organizing and presenting information, well-written nonfiction texts like Kathleen Krull's *Big Wig: A Little History of Hair* and Joyce Sidman's *Ubiquitous: Celebrating Nature's Survivors* provide rich examples of descrip-

tive writing, figurative language, and imagery—concepts historically taught using fiction. Examining nonfiction texts as writing models reveals authors' different approaches to topics and diverse writing styles (Cappiello, Zarnowski, and Aronson, 2013).

#### **Pair nonfiction texts with texts on related topics.**

Offering nonfiction materials that supplement fiction, poetry, or other nonfiction works encourages students to explore real-world connections, exposes them to other texts they might read, and enhances their understanding of historical and technical references they encounter while reading. Pair primary sources like Martin Luther King, Jr.'s "I Have a Dream" speech with Kadir Nelson's stunning picture book *I Have a Dream*. Read poems from Douglas Florian's *UnBEElievables* alongside *Hive Detectives* by Loree Griffin Burns.

### **Incorporating Nonfiction Texts in the Classroom**

With the adoption of Common Core State Standards, there is heightened emphasis on reading nonfiction throughout the school day, but teachers need effective, easy-to-implement ways to increase students' nonfiction reading skills, access, and motivation for reading nonfiction. Consider these activities for using nonfiction texts in the classroom:

**Book talk more nonfiction.** Adding nonfiction books and magazines to our daily book commercials introduces students to books they might read and increases their title awareness for types of books available. As Linda Gambrell says, "Children read what we bless." Personally recommending nonfiction books communicates to students that we value nonfiction and find it interesting to read.

**Read aloud nonfiction texts.** Regularly reading nonfiction picture books, poetry, articles, excerpts, and online websites like Wonderopolis (located at [www.wonderopolis.com](http://www.wonderopolis.com)) increases

### **Children's and Young Adult Nonfiction Book Awards and Review Sources**

**National Council of Teachers of English Orbis Pictus Award for Outstanding Nonfiction for Children**

<http://www.ncte.org/awards/orbispictus/>

**Association for Library Services to Children Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal**

<http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/sibertmedal/>

**Young Adult Library Services Association Award for Excellence in Nonfiction for Young Adults**

<http://www.ala.org/yalsa/nonfiction/>

**National Council for the Social Studies Notable Trade Books for Young People**

<http://www.socialstudies.org/notable>

**National Science Teachers Association Outstanding Science Trade Books for Students K-12**

<http://www.nsta.org/publications/ostb/>

**The Nonfiction Detectives Blog**

<http://www.nonfictiondetectives.com/>

These discussions help students make personal connections to what they read, increase reading motivation, and construct deeper understanding of content (Asselin, 2004).

“ Personally recommending nonfiction books communicates to students that we value nonfiction and find it interesting to read.

**Offer students a range of nonfiction texts and encourage browsing.** As with any genre they avoid, when my students claim they dislike reading nonfiction, I assume they lack positive reading experiences. Moss and Hendershot (2002) observed that when students have more access and exposure to engaging nonfiction texts, their motivation and interest in reading nonfiction improved. Students need instruction in the “predictable characteristics” of nonfiction texts and lots of practice reading nonfiction in order to develop self-efficacy and skill (Miller, 2002). In addition to teaching students how to preview, locate, and identify key information in nonfiction texts, teachers must expose students to a variety of engaging nonfiction and promote awareness of the text types available. ■

*Donalyn Miller will speak at the 2014 AWSP/ WASA Summer Conference, June 29 – July 1, in Spokane. Learn more at [www.awsp.org/summerconference](http://www.awsp.org/summerconference).*



Offer students a range of nonfiction texts and encourage browsing.

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# Dancing through the Storms



## Dr. Adolph Brown, III

*Business & Education Leadership Authority*

### Some people espouse

they have come from humble beginnings; I was destitute, from “the bottom of life.” I was one of many at-risk students in public school and a high risk gang-involved youth in my community. I was reared by a single-parent mother in an inner-city housing project. I witnessed and was often a part of intense violence. My oldest sibling and only brother was murdered when I was only eleven years old. I did not meet my father until I ventured to find him when I was 18 years old. I was homeless. I experienced severe poverty. I was a wayward juvenile delinquent. I was lost, but I was hungry. I had a genuine hunger for “something greater” as I was struggling for the correct path.

I may have been from “the bottom of life,” but I was growing up under the influence and tutelage of my mother, my grandfather, and my aunt Lorraine. It is as a direct result of these individuals and a “village” of caring community members and educators that I was the first person in my family of five to graduate from high school. I was also the first of my family members to attend college—and the list goes on! Nowadays, as a businessman,

professor, education/clinical psychologist, author, philanthropist, television talk show host, and master teacher, I give others the essential tools and resources to transcend a life of “mediocrity” to a life filled with supernatural success and joy. Whether from the stage or as a program consultant, I inspire *excellence* for all...from troubled youth to status quo corporations and priority schools.

Life isn’t about getting through the storms, it’s about dancing in the rain!

It’s about staying positive even in tough times. We must continue to remember, “It is not how you start, but how you finish that matters!”

My real “Backstory” is in the word that embodies how I live—*enthusiastically*. Enthusiasm originally meant “God in you.” This meaning still applies to my life.

Shine On! ■

### It’s Important to Reach Me to Teach Me!

“It’s important to reach me to teach me” is the subconscious yearning of many student learners today. If we as educators only knew what it took for many students to make their ways to our classrooms on a daily basis, we would be “raving cheering fans.”

On the one hand, as we address student motivation and engagement for learning, we often begin with the teacher-student relationship as the precursor. Although the teacher-student relationship is a central and critical motivator for student adjustment, it is the early relationship dynamics with individuals within the context of the family that provide the foundation and predictors of the quality of subsequent peer and teacher interactions.

A positive teacher-student relationship significantly contributes to student learning outcomes. On the other hand, a problematic relationship can be detrimental to student development.

When teachers avoid the traps of only looking at the surface of students without taking the time and effort to delve deeper into them, the groundwork for significant connections is made. This fertile ground lends itself to the blossoming of both differentiated instruction where each student can be seen as “a study of one” while in the context of a smoothly run classroom.

Hear more on this topic from Dr. Adolph Brown at the 2014 AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, June 29 – July 1, in Spokane. Learn more at [www.awsp.org/summerconference](http://www.awsp.org/summerconference).

Our quarterly profile of educational leadership in Washington state.

## Sue Davis, Don Rash, Sharon Green and Sue English

It is with feelings of both joy and sadness that we say goodbye to four long-time AWSP staff members who are retiring at the end of this school year. We will miss each of you greatly, but we are excited to be the ones to see you off into your next adventures!



**Sue Davis**

*Executive Assistant,  
Conferences and Events  
Coordinator, Business  
Partnerships*



**Don Rash**

*Director of Middle Level  
Programs and Intern,  
Certification and Principal  
Support Programs*



**Sharon Green**

*Director of Diversity  
Initiatives and Services*



**Sue English**

*Cispus Learning Center  
General Manager*

### 1. How many years have you been here?

*Sue Davis:* 15

*Don:* 10 (AWSP member for 21 years)

*Sharon:* 9 (AWSP member for 28 years)

*Sue English:* 24

### 2. What is one highlight of your time here that stands out in your memory?

*Sue Davis:* Remodeling of the building was certainly a highlight. And I will miss our special office events – bowling tournaments, golf games, funny holiday pictures, birthday party games, etc.

*Don:* Being on the other end of the phone line when a member called because they truly needed someone to talk to, knowing that I made a real difference in their career and life. Also, meeting a former intern who I have gotten to know, who comes up to me to let me know they just got their first administrative job.

*Sharon:* Recruiting members for the Diversity Task Force, their enthusiasm and willingness to prepare and present at conferences, write articles and to hear and see what they and others were doing at their schools to close the achievement gap.

*Sue English:* There have been so many highlights through the years that it is difficult to pin point just one. However, I think of the time that the bridge over the Cispus River collapsed and we had 200 sixth-graders from the Tacoma area [stay at Cispus Learning Center]. I slept on the floor in my office to handle any emergencies that might come up and phone calls from concerned parents.

### 3. How has the association changed during your time here?

*Sue Davis:* The employees, the building, the landscape, the way we do business...we've changed a lot in 15 years!

*Don:* The pace with which building leaders must now work, and how technology has changed the way principals

do their work and how the AWSP staff provides services to our members – and yet, school administration and AWSP work is still all about working with people.

*Sharon:* The communications area. Each director brought the AWSP communications to a new level and it just kept getting better.

*Sue English:* I guess the biggest change has been the accounting process. When I first began at Cispus, I was doing a single spread sheet on a Mac computer for payables and receivables; now I have binders full of accounting each month.

### 4. What will you miss the most about your current position?

*Sue Davis:* Working with the AWSP staff and members! I will also miss the relationships I've made with people in the hospitality industry. And the meeting planning—my favorite part of my job!

*Continued on page 20*

Continued from page 19

*Don:* The people! I will truly miss the daily interaction I have enjoyed with the best staff in the world here at AWSP. I will miss the wonderful and highly professional AWSP and Component Board members. I feel very honored to have had the opportunity of working with and for them. I will miss working with the university program directors, and OSPI and PESB staff in an effort to make the certification process more effective. I will miss working with principal interns in many different settings.

*Sharon:* All the people—we are a people business. Interacting with the AWSP staff and Board members, and the nice places where we've met around the state organized by Sue Davis.

*Sue English:* The daily challenges and talking with all the great people that come to Cispus.

### **5. What are you looking forward to most?**

*Sue Davis:* Time for my gardening and projects, as well as traveling to see family without having to be on a tight timeline!

*Don:* Time! Time to putz around the house, time to read the newspaper while enjoying a second cup of coffee, being able to go somewhere with my wife, Lynn, (for a one-day excursion or multi-day road trip) at the drop of the hat, and being able to spend time with my wife as we plan for our first of many travel adventures. Destination: anyplace warm during the winter months.

*Sharon:* Reclaiming my Mondays as a day when I have no appointments and nowhere to go.

*Sue English:* Being home with my husband and seeing the grandchildren more often. ■

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# — Stories of — Success!



Earlier this year, AWSP became part of a campaign called *Our Kids, Our Future*. The campaign launched in January and is led by a group of Washington education organizations aiming to highlight the excellence in Washington's public schools.

The partners started the campaign because they recognized that the success stories of our schools are often drowned out by politics, bad press and the opinions of those who believe our education system is broken.

The campaign website highlights successes—both large and small—of schools across the state, showing that our public education system is still something to believe in.

The following pages highlight just a few of the many success stories submitted to the *Our Kids, Our Future* campaign website. We hope they will leave you feeling encouraged that the work you are doing has an undeniable impact on our kids and our future. You can find more success stories and submit your own at [www.ourkidswa.org](http://www.ourkidswa.org).

*Continued on page 22*

**Our Kids**  
**Our Future**



Highlighting Excellence in Washington State

KRISTINA GREEN



## Dual Language Programs Growing in Popularity

Story courtesy of the Washington State School Directors' Association

Principal Felecia Wells warmly welcomed us into the halls of Mount View Elementary School. Located in Burien in Highline Public Schools, there is something special happening here. Students enrolled in the dual language immersion program are not only learning to read and write in another language. Perhaps more importantly, they are gaining a greater understanding, tolerance, appreciation and respect for other cultures.



Mount View dual language students are taught core classes half the day in English and half the day in Spanish.

half the day in English and half the day in Spanish, where both languages are equally valued. The end goal is that students will not only be bilingual, but also biliterate.

In kindergarten and first grade, the students are paired together as "bilingual buddies." A native English speaker paired with a native Spanish speaker encourages buddies to learn from one another and gain confidence in the other's language.

Mount View began its two-way dual language immersion program with an inaugural class of kindergartners in 2009. Every year the program grows with each graduating class moving up to the next grade level and a new group of kindergartners beginning in the fall. The program will reach full implementation of six grades in fall 2016.

The key to the program's success is that 50 percent of the students are native English speakers and 50 percent are native Spanish speakers. The students are taught core classes

"A lot of thought goes in at the district and board level considering in which schools these programs would work," explained Principal Wells. "They are always looking at where that makes the most sense."

Mount View is the second school within Highline Public Schools to implement a dual language immersion program and the demand is increasing.

## Students at the Brinnon School Say "No!" to Bullying

Story by Lisa Johnston, K-2 Teacher, Brinnon School, Brinnon SD

At the Brinnon School October assembly, the primary class helped lead a presentation about how they can help stop bullying.

The P.T.O. wanted to support the effort and purchased "Don't Be a Bully" shirts for the entire student body. The t-shirts were locally printed by the Pizza Factory in Port Townsend. The kids and staff wear their shirts on Thursdays to show their commitment to treating each other with respect.

Students also signed a pledge to keep the school bully-free. In addition, the school is moving forward with a partnership with a neighboring school district to implement a positive school climate curriculum to further support these efforts.



Brinnon School students don their "Don't Be a Bully" shirts every Thursday.

On a recent Thursday, three of the students wearing the t-shirts were asked: "Why do you feel it's important to wear your t-shirts to school?"

The students replied:

"School is not a place to be bullied."  
- Richard Gunstone

"Brinnon School is definitely a good place to learn, respect people, use good words and not to fight." - Alex Roaf

"I think it's important we need the school to be bully-free. We don't like bullies. I've been bullied in school before and the reason why we wear these shirts is because we deserve not to be bullied at all." - Victoria Truppner

# Career Fair at Jemtegaard Middle School Helps Students Prepare for Future

Story by Rene' Carroll, Marketing and Communications Consultant for Washougal SD

Jemtegaard Middle School (JMS) students were provided the opportunity to explore a variety of possible careers at a Career Fair held in February.

"The 29 presenters included many Washougal residents and businesses," said David Cooke, JMS Principal. "Each student took part in three half-hour presentations. The students picked two of their choices and we picked the other to expand their horizons."

Some of the jobs included Secret Service Agent, Chiropractor, Cosmetologist, Pilot, Detective, Nurse, Firefighter, Movie Director, Videographer and Surgical Technician.

The day started with an assembly with guest speaker Jason Scukanec from the ESPN sports radio show, "1080 the Fan." Scukanec was a standout football player at Mt. View High School in Vancouver and had a brief career in the National



Students visit with firefighter Danny Birch during Jemtegaard's career fair in February.

Football League. He is now a radio broadcaster and discussed the twists and turns in life and stressed the importance of a good education.

Danny Birch, firefighter with the East County Fire and Rescue and Washougal resident, enjoys the part of his job that brings him into school classrooms.

"Some kids are already thinking about becoming a firefighter and it is important to let them know what it takes to enter this career," he said. "I tell them that it is challenging and knowing what I know now I would have worked harder in school to be prepared."

"We wanted students to have a chance to see the many possible directions out there for careers so they can begin planning now," Cooke said. "We are very grateful to our community that took their valuable time to give students this experience."

# Harvest Time Comes to Cooper Elementary in Spokane

Story courtesy of Cooper Elementary, Spokane PS

Charity Emerson points to a sugar snap vine that's twisting its way toward the top of a corn stalk. "It's called a three sister's garden," the fourth grader explains. "It's peas, squash and corn, and they work together." Meanwhile, other students meander through the Cooper Elementary School Community Garden, checking out the fruits—and veggies—of their labor.

These students and others spent part of their summer



Students at Cooper Elementary work together in the school garden.

helping turn an unused piece of school property into a thriving garden plot that's ready for harvest.

Cooper fourth grade teacher Nicole Frye says the idea for the garden came to her one year ago while she was giving a state assessment test to fifth grade students.

"There were some questions on there about gardening, and I realized our kids who live in an urban area like this maybe

*Continued on page 24*



don't have that experience," she says.

Cooper Principal Rona Williams got behind the idea, helping Frye seek the knowledge and funding to get the project planted.

"We had a member of the (Washington State University extension) Master Gardeners help us with planting schedules," Williams says. "The district poured the concrete for the greenhouse and provided the irrigation."

While many hands pitched in, the garden's roots were established thanks to funding from the Washington State Potato

Commission, the Spokane Public Schools Foundation, the Cooper PTO and KXLY.

The work wasn't easy. "We had to weed a lot in the hot sun," fourth grader Marista Nolan says. "But if anything was ripe we could take it home and eat it."

Before heading back to class, several students gather handfuls of strawberries to share with their peers.

"We get to pass class eating strawberries," a fifth grade boy says through a grin. "Yep, school's pretty awesome."

## Vashon Island Tackles School Construction and Math Challenges with STEM Learning

Story by Washington STEM

Vashon Island School District faced two seemingly unrelated challenges shared by many school systems across Washington: it needed to replace its aging and dilapidated high school building, and too many of its students were struggling in math. The district decided to tackle the problems in tandem.

Building a new school would require dozens of technical professionals and skilled tradespeople. For two years, the building site would be swarming with people who use science, technology, engineering and math in their daily work. District officials recognized this was a once-in-a-generation opportunity to show the districts' students the real-world value of math.

Working with a grant from Washington STEM, the district conceived the Real Time Math Project. The project is designed to help middle school students learn from real-world math challenges derived from the construction of the new high school.

Architects and engineers brought the design problems of the project into middle-school classrooms. How should the stairwells be built to both comply with code and promote



Middle school students tackle real-world math problems as part of Vashon Island School District's Real Time Math Project.

learning? What problems of math and physics apply to the seemingly simple but daunting plumbing problem created when an entire high school goes to the bathroom during a 10-minute break between classes?

Students eagerly tackled these problems and compared their solutions to the "real" solutions worked out by the professionals.

"It was incredible to observe both outstanding coordination between the STEM professionals and our classroom teachers to design a learning experience that was both relevant and engaging for students," says Greg Allison, principal at McMurray Middle School. "It was so motivating for students to gain a better understanding of the real-world application of the math concepts they were learning in such a practical way."

The project was so successful that Washington STEM made another grant to expand the program to the high school and elementary school.

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# Reading Mentoring Program Expands to Serve Two More Puyallup Schools

Story by Susan Gifford, Communications Specialist, Puyallup SD

A reading mentoring program in that pairs volunteer tutors with elementary students to help children boost their skills and confidence has expanded this year to include Pope and Waller Road elementary schools.

Both schools launched the Good Samaritan Readers mentoring program last month, joining established programs at Karshner, Stewart, and Sunrise elementary schools.

This is the eleventh year since the reading mentoring program, coordinated by Communities In Schools of Puyallup (CISP), began in the Puyallup School District.

Each student selected to participate is matched with a volunteer tutor who spends 45 minutes once a week helping with basic reading skills.

Nearly two dozen volunteer tutors from throughout the community have already committed to helping first graders boost their reading skills at Pope and Waller Road elementary schools.

"I can't imagine not being able to read—it is so important in life," said Waller Road Elementary tutor Laurel Farley.



Volunteer tutor David Hiegel helps first grader Trevor McBrayne sound out words in a book geared for the student's reading level.

First grader Jaimee Weber was all smiles last month after meeting Farley for the first time.

"Do I get to see you every week?" Jaimee asked excitedly as she picked out several books to read that day.

"I get to see YOU every week!" Farley responded.

At a reading table nearby, tutor David Hiegel helped first grader Trevor McBrayne sound out words in a book. It wasn't long before both Hiegel and

Trevor were giggling over the adventures in the story.

In addition to boosting students' literacy skills, Pope Elementary Principal Dave Sunich said the program provides students with a caring and trusted mentor.

"It gives them one more reason to feel connected to school and shows them that the community cares about their success," Sunich said.

Waller Road Elementary Principal Rick Cox added, "These students just want to know they are doing well, and this program provides that."

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## At Lewis and Clark High School, Students Chart Their Own Paths

Story by Amanda Richter, Vancouver PS

In the spirit of the school's namesakes, students at Lewis and Clark High School are charting their own paths to success. Last fall, the school debuted a learning model that puts academic progress in their hands.

Unlike high schools where students attend classes in several different rooms each day, Lewis and Clark's blended learning model combines online instruction, small group work, and strong teacher support. Approximately

90 percent of the coursework is completed through a web-based platform called Edgenuity, and each student receives a take-home laptop. At the school, students work in flex areas, where they have assigned stations.

Schedules are flexible and change weekly. As in the professional world, students prioritize their own workloads. Said

*Continued on page 26*

Principal Rob Duncan, “There’s definitely a different way in which you’re going about learning.”

Working this way has advantages. “Once you sit down and do the work, it becomes easy to stay caught up,” explained senior Raiann McCracken. “You can work faster if you want to. It just depends on what type of student you are.”

Added freshman Genie Miles, “It’s all your responsibility—keeping track of your classes, contacting teachers, going to breakout sessions, and making sure you’re not too far behind. This will help me become more responsible and mature.”



Students Tyler Maniex (left) and Mathew Kolbe (right) work in a small group.

The transition to blended learning has required changes for teachers, too. Said Science Teacher Jessie Garza, “I’m more of a facilitator.” He added that the model gives him more opportunities to work one-on-one with students.

Not everything has changed, however. Advanced Placement and Advancement Via Individual Determination still prepare students for the rigors of college. And at approximately 150 students, Lewis and Clark remains a small school.

But with blended learning, Lewis and Clark is leaving behind its history as an alternative school as students blaze their own trails. No doubt Meriwether and William would approve.

## Art Project Encourages Student Expression at Lake Stevens Middle School

Story by Jayme Taylor, Director of Communications, Lake Stevens SD

Her name is Rosie. She’s an elephant. She’s more than six feet tall and 10 feet wide, and she’s giving a voice to students at Lake Stevens Middle School (LSMS).

Students are encouraged to write anonymous messages and post them on Rosie—the elephant in the room. The project started earlier this school year when members of the Friends of Rachel (FOR) Club wanted to do something to combat isolation and bullying. FOR is named after Rachel Scott, the first student killed in the tragedy at Columbine High School in 1999.



Elephant ‘Rosie’ gives Lake Stevens Middle School students a place to write down their thoughts and feelings when they’re going through a tough time.

“Rosie helps kids who are going through tough times,” said Tyler Koon, a sixth-grader. “We learned about little elephants that were put onto a reservation and were killing the rare white rhinos who shared their space. The killing stopped after bigger elephants were introduced to teach the smaller ones to get along. The goal of our club is ‘don’t be a little

elephant, be a big one.’ Rosie is a big one.”

Rosie’s messages range from encouraging quotes to things



students have overcome, such as the divorce of their parents and eating disorders.

On Dec. 17, Rosie traveled across the trestle for Open Studio Night for Teens at the Schack Art Center in Everett. Several LSMS students attended the event to engage with other students to encourage them to write their own messages.

"I'm fairly new to the club, but I really like how kids can share their stories and be proud of who they are," said Journey Scott, a seventh-grader. "No one needs to know your name—just being able to share your thoughts with Rosie helps when things are hard or intense."

The FOR club is led by LSMS teachers Heather Beg and Jody Cain.

## Wenatchee High School Freshmen Learn the Science and Math of Golf

Story by Teri Fink, Wenatchee SD

Wenatchee High School freshman learned about the science of golf at the Wenatchee Golf and Country Club this year. Biology teacher Beth Hammerberg, math teacher Tom Baumeister and English teacher Dave Carlson took their freshman students to the private golf club for STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) lessons related to golf and golf courses. Country club staff and volunteers taught the curriculum.



Golf course Assistant Superintendent Shaun Knutzen, a WSU graduate with a degree in crops and soil science, shows students a core sample from the course, demonstrating the different types of grass and soil and how they affect the maintenance of a course.

Teacher Beth Hammerberg says, "Students had to figure out things like soil amendments—fertilizers, and pesticides and the rate of application."

Howard Meyer, retired agriculture and math teacher, taught the math of golf. Meyer also worked on the grounds crew at the Country Club for many years during the summer. Students measured tee boxes and calculated the area, or used a GPS to calculate the area of a portion of the fairway.

"I like doing hands-on math like this because now you all have an association," Meyer told the kids. By measuring a triangle and walking the triangle, Meyer explained, the

students know what a triangle means.

Meyer also taught the kids, most of whom had never golfed, the technology of clubs and balls, along with the vocabulary and etiquette of golf.

English teacher Dave Carlson included an English component, having the kids write poems about what they were experiencing on the course.

Says Wenatchee High School principal Bob Celebrezze, "Our students are

surrounded with opportunities to explore. Cross-curricular concepts, including the science of golf, engage students and connect the subjects in meaningful ways."

And the whole point of being on a golf course, besides learning about math and science, is golfing. Robbi Beckstead, general manager of the Country Club, gave putting lessons.

The curriculum for the day was put together by a non-profit organization called "First Green." ■



Dr. Shannon McKinney looks on as K-5 STEM fifth graders work on stop motion animation with legos.

# STEM and the Whole Child

## How One Innovative School is Fostering Hope for the Future

**By Dr. Shannon McKinney**

*Principal, K-5 STEM at Boren School  
Seattle PS*

*My last writing of any substance, other than my weekly "What's Happening at K-5 STEM?" emails, was my doctoral dissertation. When asked to write this article about hope, I found myself thinking in that dissertation writing mode again: How can I effectively communicate the degree to which our K-5 STEM school really does help students foster*

*a sense of hope about themselves and their future? In structuring this article, I did a bit of research to uncover what the current thinking is on developing hope in children. I uncovered several key themes that, loosely speaking, positively correlate with our experiences at K-5 STEM. What follows are examples of how we are "doing that."*





A fifth grade student explains the stop motion animation process to Dr. Shannon McKinney while using an iPhone to record her lego creation.

PHOTOS: CHRISTUMBUSCH

When you get right down to it, it is *hope* that is driving the educational STEM movement. K-5 STEM's mission statement is, "We will nurture tomorrow's critical thinkers with project-based learning, a culture of accountability, and a celebration of the whole child." As STEM education is being "pushed down" to the elementary level, we work to emphasize that we are not producing automatons who will be the cure for our nation's ailing economy; that concern has been the gist of the limited negative feedback I've received from individuals about our school, and is one of the reasons our educational setting so critical.

Without a doubt, my ten years as a mathematics teacher combined with fifteen years as an educational administrator have provided me with many

learning opportunities that translate effortlessly into leading this school. One lesson I have learned is that being expert at mathematics (or any other content) is only part of the puzzle of success. Teaching students *content* must be explicitly linked with teaching students *how to be a human being* if we are to change the landscape of our country's future. We have a unique opportunity at K-5 STEM to foster strong moral development while developing students' STEM literacy. So, what happens when a school focuses on STEM literacy *and* development of the "whole child?"

In a recent publication, Snyder, LaPointe, Crowson, & Early (1998) equivocate hope with such statements as "I can do that" or "I will never stop trying." This idea aligns with our school's focus on problem solving, creativity and increasing self-esteem. At K-5 STEM, we use the engineering

“ Teaching content must be explicitly linked with teaching students how to be a human being if we are to change the landscape of our country's future.

process—broadly speaking—as our problem-solving process for just about anything. The process begins with identifying a human problem, followed by a cyclical process of developing a plan (a goal, a hope), implementing that plan, determining if that plan was successful, and redesigning and re-implementing it if not. The underlying message: It's okay to fail—it is failure that makes things better in the long

*Continued on page 30*



run. We celebrate having an “odd” idea and sharing it. This builds self-esteem, which according to current literature, also builds a student’s sense of hope.

## Classroom Examples

### From Science Kits to Skate Parks

Our first grade students extended their learning from a “Balls and Ramps” science kit to exploring skateboarding. They went on a walking field trip to a local skate park, met with an engineer, and designed their own skate parks, incorporating the fundamentals they had experienced and seen firsthand.

### If I Could Invent One Thing...

Ms. Schmick recently asked grade levels of students to submit an invention idea as part of a nationwide “Doodle4Google” contest. The theme for this mini-project was, “If I could invent one thing to make the world a better place...” Students came up with inventions that turned polluted water into clean water, zip lines that provided food to hungry people, tennis shoes made out of recyclable materials, methods of time travel, and more. Then the students wrote 50 word or less about their invention and how it would positively impact the world.

### 3D Printing

Ashley Toney’s fourth and fifth graders applied the engineering design process of “defining a problem, designing solutions and optimizing solutions” using available 3D technology. A University of Washington graduate student presented a lesson about the evolution of 3D printing and the various 3D printers available, and demonstrated model production on a Makerbot 3D printer. With the help of a Makerbot Digitizer and plasticine clay, students learned the concept of rapid prototyping. Each student developed an idea for an

object, created a plasticine prototype and then scanned the model on the Digitizer turntable, thus creating a “thing” file for future 3D printing. The students gained a first-hand experience of rapid prototyping using latest 3D technologies.



The people I have hired, from the office staff to every classroom teacher, wanted to be part of this innovative school simply because it gave them a sense of hope for the future of education.

### Bridge Over Hot Lava

Our 5th grade teacher, Craig Parsley, said that a “thoughtful ponder” by one of his students resulted in an exciting and engaging activity that is still impacting the learning in the classroom and across the school. He said that one student remarked aloud, “Let’s pretend that the area between the lab benches (their classroom is a true science lab) is hot lava...” and another student piped in, “Then we’d need a bridge to get across! Let’s build one!” This led to the creation of a bridge made out of vertically positioned strips of cardboard glued to one another, but not without failed attempts (capturing again the engineering design process). This bridge is capable of supporting slightly over 1,000 lbs. This was verified by a hanging scale with multiple “tests.”

Each of these activities was an opportunity to integrate content and encourage students to solve problems and be creative, without fear of criticism.

## A Hopeful Staff Fosters Hopeful Students

Recent research (Marques, Pais-Ribeiro, & Lopez, 2007b) supports previous thinking about how caregivers foster hope development in children (Snyder, 1994). I ask my staff to think of themselves as “caregivers” for our students during

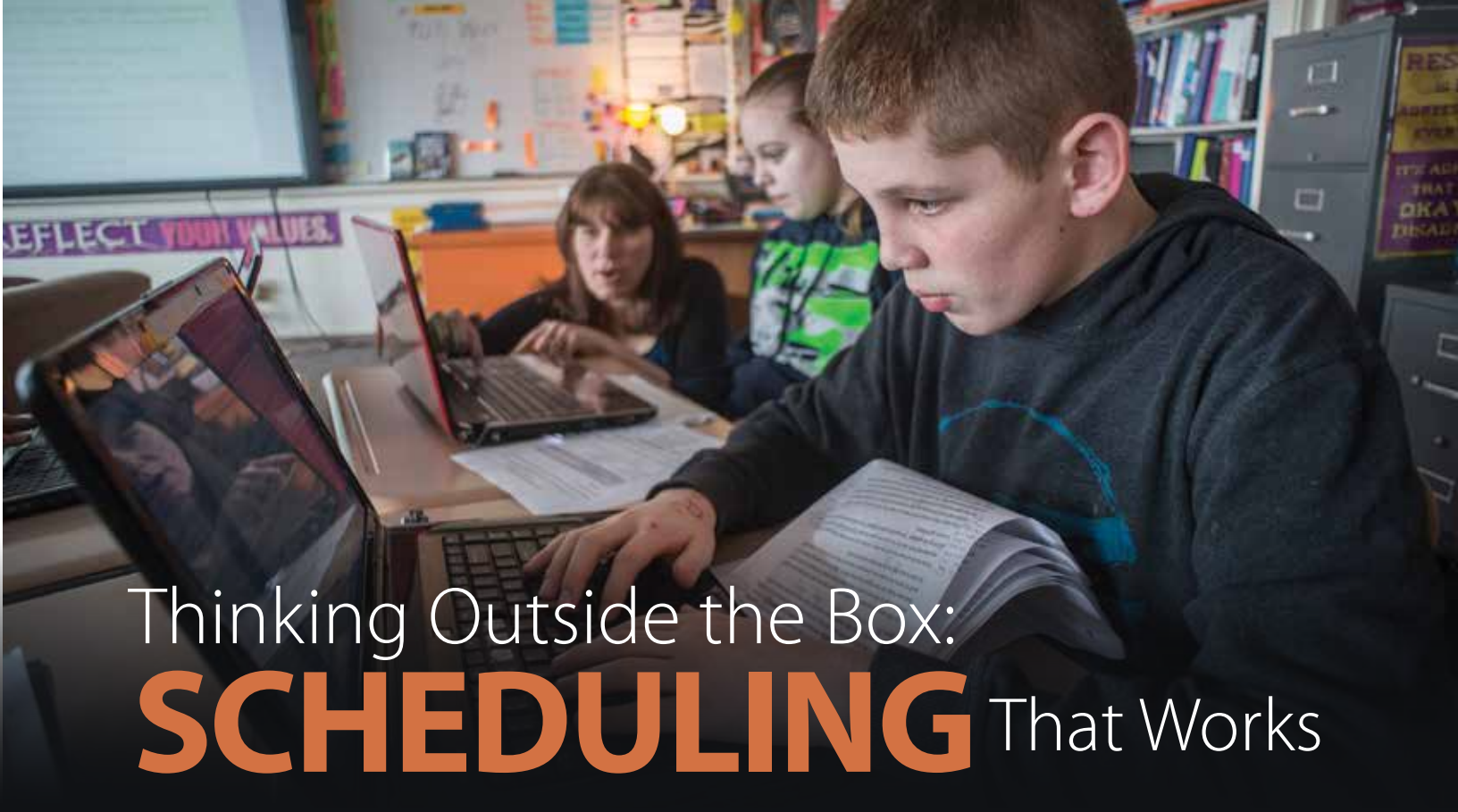
the school day. I had the luxury and the “principal’s dream come true” of hiring my initial staff for the school when it opened its doors a year and a half ago. As Jim Collins (2001) cautions in *Good to Great*, having the right people on the bus is the first

crucial step in effective organizations. The people I have hired, from the office staff to every classroom teacher, wanted to be part of this innovative school simply because it gave *them* a sense of hope for the future of education. They wanted to be part of something different, creating something from scratch that promised to differ in substantial ways from the current educational environment in most elementary schools. Having these “hopeful” and motivated adults around our kids 6-plus hours a day has in another way, through osmosis and explicit practice, definitely instilled a sense of hope in our students.

## How’re They Doing That?

From our inception, we’ve had many professionals, teachers, principals, and organizations visit our school to see “how we’re doing that.” One recent visitor, a principal from Alaska, followed up his visit with an email to me. He remarked, “I was deeply impressed by the quality of work the students were producing and the enthusiasm they showed in their work.” This is why we do what we do. ■

*Read Dr. Shannon McKinney’s full article and listing of publications referenced at [www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal](http://www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal).*



# Thinking Outside the Box: **SCHEDULING** That Works

Lynn Davidson, seventh grade ELA teacher, provides support to students during flex period.

DEBBIE PRESTON

## By Patti Fouts

*Principal, Forks Middle School  
Quillayute Valley SD*

**A**t Forks Middle School (FMS), the shift to a flexible master schedule has been a great success. Student discipline referrals have dropped 83 percent to date, all tardies have been eliminated, and structures are in place to facilitate frequent monitoring of student achievement, behavior and timely interventions, thereby improving student learning and moving us closer to achieving our mission of ensuring high levels of learning for all students.

Scheduling should be driven by the foundational question in education: What is best for kids? Forks Middle School was no exception.

## By Erika Rudnicki

*Dean of Students, Star Lake Elementary School  
Federal Way PS  
(Formerly at Forks Middle School)*

“Scheduling should be driven by the foundational question in education: What is best for kids?”

### How Can We Have It All?

To begin the master scheduling process, School Improvement Team (SIT) members developed a list of what a master schedule should provide students within the school day. The list was lengthy. As the list was considered in relationship to the existing schedule, the question surfaced: How do we include everything? We spun our wheels trying to fit it all in, but the reality was, it

just wouldn't all fit. So, the question shifted: If we can't have it all, what can we give up? The response: nothing. Members of the team felt strongly that each and every course or opportunity was valuable to students. If we were to accomplish our goals, our thinking had to shift about how to allocate existing time and resources.

### Thinking Creatively about Timing

We determined that it wasn't necessary for everyone to transition at the same time, thereby eliminating schoolwide transitions and unstructured passing time. We shifted from allocating equal time for every course to the premise that each course did

*Continued on page 32*



Continued from page 31

not have to have the same allocation of time. This thinking resulted in the move from a traditional, schoolwide, six-period-day bell schedule to flexible, grade-level specific, eight-period-day bell schedules wherein:

- English language arts were blocked (110 minutes)
- Math and science were blocked (110 minutes)
- Electives and physical education (PE) moved from a traditional 60-minute period to a 40-minute period to maximize core instruction while ensuring all students had the opportunity to participate in elective courses and PE
- A 30-minute flex period was incorporated at each grade level
- A 35-minute schoolwide enrichment period was scheduled at the end of the school day
- Grade level teams were provided 80 minutes of common planning time daily

### Flex Period Allows for Planning

Grade level teams plan together for a 30-minute flex period, four times per week, designed to result in higher levels of learning for all students.



Forks Middle School Principal Patti Fouts.

The shift in scheduling allows for ten staff members per grade level (four core teachers, two special education teachers, two paraeducators, one ELL teacher, and one librarian) to support student learning through intervention and extension. Student placement changes weekly based on common formative assessment results in core academic areas. Students who need additional time and support to meet grade level standards engage in intervention, while students who demonstrate mastery of grade level standards engage in activities to extend their learning.

### Enrichment Period Increases Engagement

School engagement has been a challenge and a priority at Forks Middle School. Staff felt strongly that all students should be provided the opportunity to succeed, build relationships, and be engaged in school as well as to have choice, even in a climate of limited resources. Incorporating an enrichment period was paramount in our efforts to engage students. To build an enrichment program, teachers self-selected an interest and wrote a course description. Students were surveyed for placement on a quarterly basis. Enrichment course offerings included:

- 21st Century Design (developing apps using tablets)
- Sports Statistics (reinforcement of math standards through a sports lens)
- Percussion Ensemble
- Leadership
- Yearbook
- Minecraft
- Upgrade FMS (improving FMS building and grounds)
- Personal Wellness (quarterly requirement)
- Warrior Reviewers (book reviews)
- Creative Writing
- Spanish I & II
- Theater Sports



Forks Middle School students engaged in "Story, Story... Die," a student favorite in Theater Sports, an enrichment class focused on theater improvisation.

DEBBIE PRESTON



- Journalism
- Robotics

Clubs and groups are also held during the enrichment period to reduce impact on core instruction. Students may be engaged in a variety of groups that focus on positive choices and readiness to learn. Groups include:

- Teen Outreach Project
- Prevention Club (drug and alcohol and risk behavior prevention)
- Native American Indian Boys Group
- Native American Indian Girls Group
- Community Voices

The enrichment period is also used for individual support of Tier III behavior students (those students who need individualized behavior support plans and frequent, high levels of behavioral support and monitoring). One-to-one intervention support services are offered by the principal, counselor, and student support staff.

## The Difference Flexibility Has Made

This flexible schedule provided the overall structure to support multiple school improvement initiatives:

- Common Core State Standards (CCSS) Implementation
- Positive Behavior Interventions & Supports (PBIS)
- Olweus Anti-Bullying Initiative (weekly class meeting time)
- Response to Intervention (RTI)
- Enrichment/engagement opportunities for all students
- Embedded collaborative time for Professional Learning Community (PLC) work

Students have commented,

"It's like a whole new school this year."

"It's a kid-friendly, collaborative, learner-centered environment. We didn't give up anything. We gained everything." ■



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# The Lifelong Takeaways of LEADERSHIP CAMP

*Cispus and Chewelah Peak put the “Hope” in “Now What?”*

**By Martin E. Fortin, Jr.**

*Director of Learning Centers, AWSP*

One of the tools we use at leadership camp is the Three W’s of evaluation: *What* happened? So *What*? and *Now What*?

We see the *What Happened* component as the effects of *removal, opportunity, reflection, community, and momentariness* that makes retreat learning so powerful. To answer the *So What* and *Now What* questions, I went to my Facebook friends and posted this inquiry:

*I am writing an article for principals about positive experiences at Cispus and Chewelah Peak Learning Centers. I would love to have a few individuals write about the results from a personal retreat experience at one of our camps that resulted in encouragement, inspiration, and hope for the future.*

The response was immediate and overwhelming—I heard from a dozen volunteers within hours. Eight wrote their stories. Below are four of them, and the others can be found on the AWSP website at [www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal](http://www.awsp.org/washingtonprincipal).



Hannah Kelly (back row, far left) with fellow campers.

## Hannah Kelly

Hannah Kelly was one of twenty-five seniors in her 2012 class at White Pass High School. She took the time during finals week at her university to share this message.

“Leadership camp was only one week, so why not go? Throughout that week, I’d never felt so vulnerable and invincible in my life. I met people from across the state, and I knew that I could count on them for anything. I left in tears, but never felt more empowered. Mt. Baker Leadership camp gave me the courage to leave my hometown, and go to college 300 miles away. I gained the courage to put myself out there, and now I’m an upstanding member of the Cougar Marching band at WSU, and a vital asset to my music fraternity (KKΨ). Because of Mt. Baker Leadership Camp, I have a future.”



Charlie Hilen and his wife, Katie, whom he met at leadership camp.

## Charlie Hilen

Charlie Hilen is the Radio-TV teacher and station manager at Mercer Island High School. He is also the ASB Advisor. Charlie and his wife, Katie, met at camp.

“As a 16 year old at a new school, I couldn’t find my place. Leadership camp gave me the courage to create my own path. This path lead me back to Mt. Baker a year later where I met the person



who would push me to be my best self. After volunteering for numerous years at Mt. Baker, I took my wife's advice and guidance of my camp colleagues and pursued a teaching career. In my second year of teaching, I landed my dream job, teaching and running the ASB Leadership Program. The people and experiences at Mt. Baker have both shaped my goals and helped me achieve them."



Marissa Hice (center) at the Cispus Mt. Baker leadership camp.

## Marissa Hice

Marissa Hice is an education major at WSU. After attending Mt. Baker leadership camp for two years, she then served as a junior counselor for three more. I have no doubt that she will soon return as a senior counselor.

“Cispus gave me hope in the kindness of the human spirit. On this campus, people have face-to-face interactions that are uninterrupted by the ringing of a cell phone. I have been to Cispus thirteen times and each time I am reminded of a simple lesson: Kindness is everything. When I feel like there is no kindness in the world, I look through pictures from Mt. Baker Leadership Camp and see kindness. I see strangers supporting each other. I see kids taking risks and failing, but the crowd is going wild regardless. I see people entering the campus as strangers and leave as lifelong friends. I don't see a change of heart, I see an environment fostered that allows these hearts to shine through.”



Travis Ruther at Chewelah Peak's La Cima Leadership Camp with students Sonia, Gris and Moni.

## Travis Ruther

Travis Ruther is a teacher and the ASB advisor at Mark Morris High School. He was recently recognized as the Advisor of the Year by AWSP's Washington Association of Student Councils.

“Among the trees in Eastern Washington is a beautiful campus with green rooftops that represents potential and esperanza (hope). My first experience at the Chewelah Peak Learning Center was as a senior counselor at a bilingual leadership camp known as La Cima. As a Spanish language learner, I have been stretched in multiple ways as I have grown in my bilingualism, but I was not prepared for how a week of working with Latino students across the state would change my perspective. This was most clearly demonstrated while we were completing the troll stroll [a challenge course initiative]. The last stretch is very challenging to complete, but my delegates worked together in English and Spanish to succeed. They would not leave anyone behind. As we debriefed, I asked the students to use one word to describe the experience and the common word was hope: hope for the future, hope for their Latino peers, hope for themselves as individuals. These students not only learned about working and hoping together, but also renewed my hope in our future as a nation.”

So—*What* did these camp-goers take home? I believe it was a sense of what motivates them to be better, a hope for our students, and a realization that the experiences provided by their principals' support of AWSP have changed them forever. ■



# THANKS for Nine Great Years!

Diversity Efforts Have Come a Long Way, Thanks to Many of You



**By Sharon Green**

*Director of Diversity Initiatives and Services, AWSP*

**B**ack when I started working at AWSP in 2005, the newly adopted AWSP Strategic Plan included Goal 4 for Diversity, which stated,

“AWSP will provide members with resources to increase cultural competence through self-awareness, knowledge and skills to help close the achievement gap.”

One of my first tasks was to create the AWSP Diversity Task Force comprised of principals and assistant principals from across the state. Our job was to discover the needs of our membership related to cultural competence and to come up with ways of delivering services to our members.

As I retire nine years later, new leadership will bring a fresh perspective to the table and continue the work begun in 2005. However, I would like to recognize those who have worked so diligently with me over these past years. These Task Force members enthusiastically accepted responsibilities like helping to plan and present sessions at the AWSP/WASA Summer Conference, the AWSP Principals' Conference, and the former Assistant Principals' Leadership Conference.

They also penned articles for Washington Principal magazine. Professionally and personally, I enjoyed getting to know each one and want to recognize their contributions over the years.

#### Current members:

Wendell Ellis, Renton SD  
Karen Remy-Anderson, North Thurston PS  
Niki Arnold-Smith, Kennewick SD  
Charlie Diaz, Sunnyside SD  
Cameron Grow, Pullman SD  
Oksana Britsova, Seattle PS  
Karen Johnson, North Thurston PS  
Rebekah Kim, Highline PS  
Andre Wicks, Spokane PS  
Theresa Shinn, Wapato SD  
Judy Yasutake, Highline PS

#### Past members:

Ismael Flores, Yakima PS  
Wayne Hamasaki, Issaquah SD  
Heidi Hellner-Gomez, Sunnyside SD  
Patricia Moncure Thomas, Tacoma PS  
Larry Walsh, Olympia SD  
Bruce Walton, North Thurston PS  
Anitra Pinchback-Jones, Seattle PS  
Doug Rogers, Sunnyside SD

And two very involved members who have relocated to principalships in California:

Julie Perron

Jesely Alvarez-Masencup

“

“AWSP will provide members with resources to increase cultural competence through self-awareness, knowledge and skills to help close the achievement gap.”

Another early task of mine was to identify the diversity of AWSP membership by both ethnicity and gender. AWSP needed a baseline to determine future growth in these areas. We also wanted to encourage more active involvement of members of color, but needed data in order to know who and where those members were. As of January 2014, 77% of our members have voluntarily identified their gender and 60% their ethnicity on their membership profiles.

Over the last nine years, the Diversity Task Force has met twice a year to work on the tasks under Goal 4. One aspect of the meeting has been sharing about what was happening in each other's schools and districts. For example, at our last meeting, Task Force member Rebekah Kim gave a short professional development session on Blended Learning since her school is one of six schools in three districts selected for the three-year project.

As Cameron Grow stated, "even though our school populations are different, sometimes solutions to problems are a conversation away."

You will find the names and contact information of the Diversity Task Force members at [www.awsp.org/diversity](http://www.awsp.org/diversity). We would like to be a resource to you.

“ As Cameron Grow stated, “even though our school populations are different, sometimes solutions to problems are a conversation away.”

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the leadership of AWSP Executive Director Gary Kipp and the 2004-05 AWSP Executive Board for recognizing the importance of diversity and cultural competence for its membership and making it an active goal.

AWSP and its members are viewed as strong, effective leaders in working to close the achievement gap. With the AWSP Leadership Framework as one of your tools, as well as the collective wisdom of the AWSP membership, I have no doubt greater gains will be made over the next several years.

Thank you for letting me be a part of your mission. ■



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# Turning Hope *into Meaningful Action*

How does one “evaluate” the Student Leadership experience?



**By Corey Krzan**

*AmeriCorps Member*

*Washington Student Leadership*

In the world of education, it seems that so much is based on what is tangible, quantifiable, and numerable. The everyday life of a student, teacher, and administrator is crunched into lines of data to be scrutinized for the never-ending pursuit of funding our education system. When vying for such a large portion of the public’s dollar and—arguably, more importantly—trust, such practices can easily be deemed necessary. In Washington state, the overhaul of the evaluation system stemming from such a necessity has produced pages of standards, models, and criteria against which we judge our work and begin to answer that important question: “Are we doing right by our kids?”

Washington Student Leadership, while unsanctioned and beyond the jurisdiction of TPEP, Common Core, Race to the Top or any other state-sponsored evaluative process, finds itself consumed in the struggle. Beyond just its function as a support organization for students, teachers and administrators—those on the frontlines of evaluation—WSL’s involvement stems from a restless pursuit of that very same important question. So how does one begin to evaluate an organization

that has no classrooms, no exams, no retention rates, etc.? Maybe it’s from a youthful naiveté or forcibly optimistic disposition as an AmeriCorps member, but I believe we judge our work at Washington Student Leadership with a rather unorthodox criterion: hope. In an overly idealistic but truthful generalization, the programs of WSL exist, firstly, to foster hope in students

wrong” at their school. The beauty in this stark reality is that alongside their worry comes a desire to make a difference. This is where hope begins: to envision something better amidst hardship or a paralyzing status quo. One of the most important lessons a student will learn at a WSL program is that they can indeed make a difference.

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and, secondly, to give them the skills to turn such a powerful feeling into meaningful action.

Washington Student Leadership (WSL) serves an incredibly diverse array of students and schools. At the same conference, a student council concerned with lack of school spirit and apathy will work alongside another whose everyday reality may include hunger or homelessness. While at first their understanding of needs may be superficial, each student comes with some level of awareness of “what’s

While throughout these past two terms of service I’ve witnessed countless examples of hopeful students accomplishing great things, my observations are limited to the relatively brief interactions of a camp, retreat or workshop. Therefore, I submit the story I know best: my own.

## My Story: To Honor a Fallen Marine

Before I was an AmeriCorps member spending my everyday with Washington Student Leadership, I was a



student in its programs. I began as a nervous but confident 13-year-old delegate at Chinook Middle Level Leadership Camp (then called Cascade II). Chinook sparked in me a hope and passion that would bring me to the leadership program at Hanford High School, several WASC conferences, and three sessions as a delegate at Mt. Adams Leadership Camp.

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Hope and skill came together for one last endeavor in the final semester of my senior year at Hanford. What would become something much greater than we, the student council, could have ever imagined began with tragedy. Sergeant Travis D. Pfister, a 1997 graduate of Hanford, perished in a helicopter crash while serving a tour of duty with the US Marine Corps in western Iraq. It was the hope of our student leaders that this fallen Marine be remembered as a fellow Falcon who bravely served his country.

The simple yet powerful gesture with which we sought to honor Sgt. Pfister was to lower the flags in front of our school to half-staff. Much to our surprise, for honorific purposes, this can't be accomplished simply by untying the ropes and moving the flags 15 feet in a downward direction. Such an action required a proclamation from

the Governor, and—given various circumstances—would not be drafted.

Resolved in our hope, this news didn't deter our efforts. One could argue that resiliency was the first skill we displayed. Through the partnership built with our administrators over the course of the school year, we sought help from the district and state offices. Supported by Principal Todd Baddley, the Richland School Board, and the legal prowess of the school district attorney, a resolution was drafted of our own accord, officially petitioned by students, and unanimously approved by the Board. For the next five days the flags in front of Hanford High School flew at half-staff in memory of Sgt. Pfister. Press of what happened caught the attention of two of the region's largest employers who in turn declared the flags that fly in front of their buildings be lowered as well. This sparked a chain reaction and over the next several weeks, businesses, organi-

zations, and families joined in this now community-wide effort to remember one of our own.

There isn't a doubt in my mind that what we as a student body accomplished was a direct result of a caring adviser, supportive administration, and involvement in the programs of Washington Student Leadership. As unorthodox as it may be, I evaluate my experience as a student leader with hope as a principle criterion. While we must continue to crunch numbers, submit data, and evaluate our work with what is tangible, it is important that we never lose our appreciation for the positive impact that hope has on our education system. ■



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# Stories of Arrival

## How You Can Help Students Find Their Voice

**Sara Niegowski**

Director of Communication, Tukwila School District

### A Thousand Times

By Cing Zam Lun

*A thousand times!  
It's still not enough when  
I say it a thousand times.  
I miss my country, I miss my country.*

*I used to say "get out of my mind,"  
The sorrow that was inside of me.  
But I realize that  
The sorrow will never go away  
Because of what I have been through in  
my life,  
The soldiers killing people  
With no reason.  
The blood, the blood falling  
Like winter rain,  
The children hungry,  
Crying for food.*

*I used to say, "It's just a sorrow dream,  
What I saw or heard in Burma."  
Now I wonder, is it a dream or real life?  
Because where I belong is here.*

*Is it like a dream  
That I will never wake up from?  
That I am here in the United States,  
Where I feel that my life  
Has changed from being  
A homeless girl to a Queen,  
Where I close the door on my sorrow  
And open the door of my life.*

This poem was written by an English Language Learner at Foster High School as part of an annual project called "Stories of Arrival." If you listen to public radio station KBSC 91.3 in the month of April, you'll hear poems like this one being read in the (often heavily accented) voices of their own authors. The students are assisted by a professional poet in the writing process and by professional voice coaches at Jack Straw Studios during the recording process. The result is astonishingly honest and beautiful.

To provide some context, our student demographic in Tukwila is unique. The New York Times named us the most diverse district in the nation. At one elementary school, we have an English Language Learner population bordering on 70 percent, which encompasses just about every global language and dialect you can imagine. Many lack any formal education experience at all. Our poverty is also staggering, at almost 80 percent districtwide; we have a school with a homeless population that frequently approaches 25 percent.

This issue of *Washington Principal* is focused on hope, and it may seem like the killing fields of Burma are just about as far away as you can get from that sentiment. However, from a communications standpoint, I believe that telling each student's unique story contributes mightily to a culture of hope. When we—staff, community, other students—begin

to understand our students at a deep level, we challenge our assumptions and stereotypes and begin to see individuals. We can frame and showcase their experiences so they realize that what makes them "different" is an asset, not a liability. Most importantly, we take *ownership* of each student and *believe* they are capable of success.

As a principal, there are many ways, big and small, that you can share your students' stories. Here are some ideas:

- **Let the students tell you their stories.** Sometimes, like with "Stories of Arrival," their experiences can be quite foreign (literally). Other times, they can create instant empathy. For example, I know a middle school that publishes student essays about what it's like to be a pre-teen. They are funny, sincere, and so truthful that you can't help but remember what it was like to walk those same hallways when you were a middle-schooler. Share these stories in text, pictures, and videos in your school newsletter, website, social media, or local newspaper. Ask your students themselves to be ambassadors, leading school tours and presentations whenever there is a community event.
- **Let the adults tell the students' stories, wherever and whenever you can.** Open staff meetings with information about a student who may need some extra support.

Pick a “Student of the Week”—the kid who wears a suit to school every day or who creates extraordinary art—and get a 5-minute interview with him/her on your smart phone. Share it online and in your morning announcements (with parent permission). One of my favorite story-telling projects involved following a group of students from kindergarten through senior year, interviewing them on camera in each grade. The community has literally been watching them grow up, and, as a result, we have much more respect, compassion, and understanding for the challenges that face all young people today.

- **Be aware of who you recognize and what you celebrate in your school.** At one high school that is filled with straight-A, Ivy League-bound graduates, I was incredibly proud when the faculty selected a Mexican immigrant—the first in his family to attend college—to receive the “top senior” award several years ago. That student had worked his tail off to barely get a B average, but his personal growth of character and learning had been truly miraculous. When a school acknowledges perseverance and grit in addition to overall excellence, it motivates every student to do their personal best.

- **Don’t doubt the power of everyday interactions.** Create a “Caught You in the Act”-type program where staff members can easily praise a colleague for his or her hope-filled interactions with students. In Tukwila, for instance, a para-educator recently submitted kudos through a similar program for a teacher whom she overheard saying this to a student: “One day I believe you will come to me when you’re in your 40s and say ‘look what I did,’ and it is going to be something amazing. I believe in you.” These are amazingly powerful words, and I feel so lucky to be able to celebrate that teacher for what would have otherwise been an unknown act of everyday heroism. ■

# Humor me!

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





# TPEP Turbulence

Put Your Own “Oxygen Mask” On Before Helping Others with Theirs

By Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

**At the beginning** of every flight, the flight attendants are required to familiarize you with the safety guidelines of the plane. I usually read the airline’s magazine during this time, but on a recent flight, the magazine was missing. Not wanting to be the one to cause a crash by using my iPad during takeoff, I watched the safety presentation like a good passenger.

The first lesson was how to fasten our seatbelts. I thought this was interesting, since the attendant had just come down the aisle to make sure we were all buckled in. I know what you might be thinking, but this column is not about assessment coming before instruction, which might remind you of the Smarter Balanced Assessment for secondary students. This column is about what came next in the flight attendant’s demonstration.

The flight attendant continued to say that in the event of a cabin depressurization, oxygen masks will drop from the ceiling. Parents, put yours on before putting one on your screaming kid. As my grandkids are fond of saying, “Wait, what!?” Shouldn’t I stop the screaming first by putting the mask on my child and then put mine on? NO. The point here is that *you cannot help others if you yourself are struggling*. This is the lesson our state missed when deciding to roll out TPEP for teachers simultaneously to (and in many districts, before) rolling it out for principals. It might have seemed counterintuitive to put principals first, but in retrospect, it would have been the right thing to do.



Compounding the problem for principals, the Legislature in 2012 set aside a total of \$10 million to train teachers on how to be an active participant in their own evaluation, but no money was allocated for principals to learn to understand the framework that is being used for their evaluation or how to participate in the process. The oxygen mask was put on in the wrong order, and we are living through the consequences today.

While OSPI and AWSP are working together to try to find resources to provide this training in the future, we are presently experiencing the consequences of principals trying to do a good job of using a new system to evaluate teachers, at the same time they are struggling with participating in their own evaluation, at the same time they are trying to understand how to lead the implementation of a

new set of standards for learning. All of this is creating unstable footing for principals.

We are well down the road on TPEP implementation, but there are lessons to be learned from this experience that can be applied to any new initiative. One of the most significant lessons is to put the oxygen mask on the leader before putting it onto those being led. ■



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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