



# **2017-18 Legislation Committee Handbook**

*The mission of the Association of Washington School Principals is to support principals and the principalship in the education of all students.*

**Association of Washington School Principals**

Revised October 2017

# Introduction

## Background

AWSP has been an active participant in the state legislative process for years. Our annual legislative calendar is constantly updated to enable our members and staff to be better prepared and more effective in working with both legislators and the issues.

Recent years have witnessed increasing involvement by the Legislature in K-12 issues. Although their interests have varied, lawmakers have primarily centered on education reform, governance, funding, teacher principal evaluations and accountability. As legislators continue to comment on the need for principal input and participation, it becomes increasingly evident that building administrators must speak with a clear and consistent voice on education issues.

This handbook outlines and focuses the process for AWSP's involvement in legislative affairs in public education. We always welcome your suggestions on how we can improve the handbook's content or format.

## Handbook Purpose

The purpose of this handbook is to provide an overview of the strategic goals of AWSP's Legislation Committee, as well as operational procedures, timelines and contact information.

## Goal 1: Advocacy

*AWSP, and its members, will be a leading voice on statewide, K-12 education issues, including principal leadership.*

### Areas of Focus:

1. Utilize the perceptions and experiences of members to inform the AWSP legislation platform and positions.
2. Engage members in the policymaking process, as it applies to the Legislature and other education agencies and organizations.
3. Provide members with current information from the Legislature, federal and state agencies, and other education stakeholders.

## Legislative Program

The efficacy of AWSP's legislative program rests upon having a statewide, grassroots Legislation Committee. AWSP relies heavily on the expertise and insights of practicing principals from around the state to identify and respond to various professional and education issues. The Legislation Committee also responds to issues originating at the state level and conveys information to members for reflection and comment. This process allows AWSP to focus locally, regionally or statewide as needs dictate.

Our success is dependent upon several key players in the process, including:

1. Members of the AWSP Legislation Committee representing each Congressional District.
2. Component Legislative Liaison Representatives

3. AWSP Executive and Support Staff
4. Legislation Committee Chair
5. Director of Governmental Relations
6. Washington School Principals Legislative Effectiveness Association

### **Contacting Your Legislators**

AWSP has provided a direct link to all Washington state lawmakers on its website at [www.awsp.org](http://www.awsp.org). Click “Advocacy” on the menu bar located at the top of the home page, then click “Contact Your Lawmakers.”

### **Legislation Committee Function**

The AWSP Legislation Committee serves as liaison and resource to the AWSP Board on all legislative matters. Committee functions include:

1. Identifying and prioritizing AWSP legislative concerns
2. Monitoring legislative action and assisting with AWSP testimony as appropriate
3. Recommending legislative direction/action (as necessary and when practical) to the AWSP Board
4. Channeling legislative input from the membership
5. Serving as a member of the Washington School Principals’ Education Foundation Board of Directors
6. Nominating a state-level public servant for the AWSP Torch of Leadership Award

This committee is directly involved in gaining knowledge regarding legislative issues, establishing lines of communication with the membership and providing communication during periods of legislative action. Other important functions include establishing and cultivating direct, one-on-one relationships with legislators.

### **Job Descriptions**

#### **Legislation Committee: Membership**

1. Each of the 10 congressional districts in the state is represented by one member from ESPAW, AWMLP and WASSP for a total of 30 congressional district members who comprise the AWSP Legislation Committee.
2. The Legislation Committee has a chairperson and co-chair or chair-elect.
3. The ESPAW, AWMLP and WASSP federal relations liaisons are members of the AWSP Legislation Committee.
4. Each component board and AWSP president are also ex-officio members.
5. The director of governmental relations and AWSP’s retirement liaison are ex-officio members of the committee.
6. Members shall serve on a committee for three years, with one-third of the committee retiring each year. Member may be reappointed after 3 years.

#### **Legislation Committee: Chairmanship**

The chair and chair-elect of AWSP’s Legislation Committee are appointed by the president of AWSP. It is intended that the rotation into the chairmanship will provide for representation of the east side/northwest/southwest on a rotating basis. The rotation allows periodic access to the chair position for representatives of each of the component groups. The chairs work directly with the director of governmental relations and are responsible for the overall legislative program of the Association.

### **Legislation Committee: Member Responsibilities**

- Attend two Legislation Committee meetings, usually in the fall and during the legislative session. (Out-of-state meetings are to be approved by the Executive Board.)
- Assist in developing the annual Legislative Platform for AWSP.
- Provide principals with legislative information related to their congressional districts and receive input from the field on issues/concerns.
- Select principals to serve as legislative links with their local state representatives and senators.

### **Legislation Committee: Component Legislative Liaison Representatives**

Each component board of AWSP (ESPAW, AWMLP, WASSP) appoints one representative as liaison to the Legislation Committee. These members are responsible for representing the official positions of their component groups with respect to pending legislation. Additionally, the liaisons report back to the component boards at the earliest possible time regarding legislative action, committee decisions, etc.

### **Governmental Relations Director**

The director of governmental relations is an AWSP staff member with overall responsibility for AWSP's legislative program. The director is active in organizing, communicating, training, lobbying and testifying. More importantly, however, the director provides support and assists the committee and other appointed members in accomplishing AWSP's legislative goals. The director is responsible for preparing a report for each AWSP Board meeting. The purpose of this report is to provide information to the AWSP Board and to receive input and direction from the Board with respect to AWSP's position. The director also reports to component boards as requested.

## **Calendar**

AWSP's annual legislative calendar actually begins in the spring of each year, at the conclusion of the legislative session. This sets the stage for the fall meeting of the Legislation Committee, when the previous session's results and development of an agenda for the upcoming session will be discussed.

### **Fall**

1. The director of governmental relations will provide information regarding the upcoming legislative session at the fall Legislation Committee meeting. The primary focus of this effort is to develop a legislative platform recommendation to present to the AWSP Board based on the key issues identified.
2. During this meeting, all congressional district representatives will report on specific issues from their districts. It is also suggested that this meeting be used to bring in outside resources that will further the participants' knowledge regarding upcoming issues.
3. The component legislative liaison representatives or director of governmental relations will then report to their respective groups at their fall conferences/meetings on the legislative action of the Legislation Committee. It is suggested that these individuals provide information to the component group leadership as well as to the membership in general.
4. The Legislation Committee will confirm preparations for the upcoming legislative session. The committee should have, by this time, accepted input from the 10 congressional districts and from the fall component group conferences/meetings. Committee members will then finalize an action plan that will provide the director of

governmental relations the support necessary to deal with the focus issues throughout the upcoming session.

**Winter**

The director of governmental relations will coordinate the legislative efforts of the Association during the legislative session. In doing so, he or she will work closely with the Washington Association of School Administrators and/or the Washington State School Directors' Association in providing testimony on key issues to be heard in the House and Senate. The winter meeting is held during the legislative session to allow members the opportunity to discuss the current status of key issues and legislation, and to visit the Capitol, attend hearings and meet with legislators.

During the session, weekly conference calls, hosted by the governmental relations director, provide committee members an opportunity to offer input on current issues being considered by the Legislature.