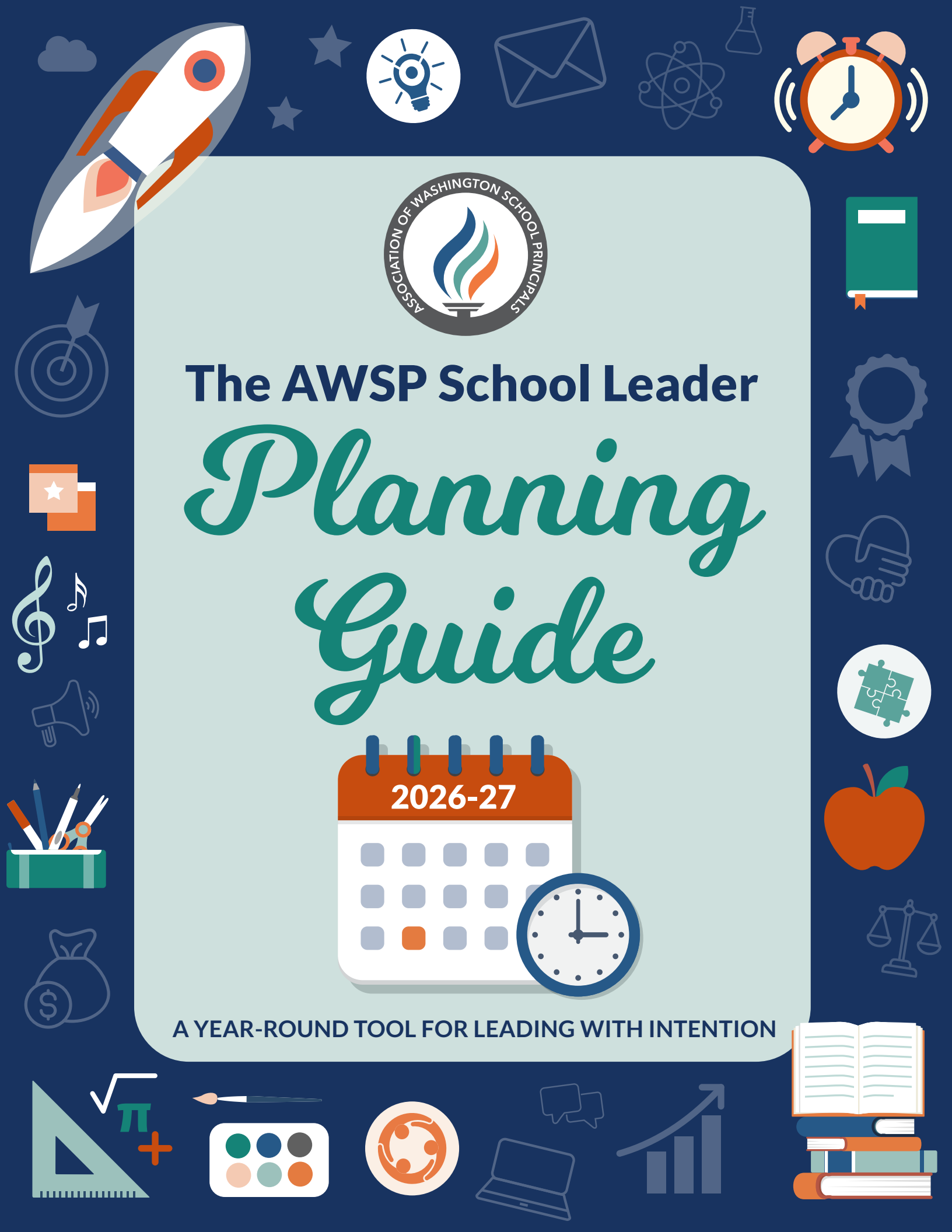




The AWSP School Leader *Planning Guide*



A YEAR-ROUND TOOL FOR LEADING WITH INTENTION



AUGUST 2026

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

August

Leadership Actions

- Work with the office team for yearly planning.
- Write a "welcome back" newsletter.
- Establish a theme for the year.
- Communicate back-to-school events and news through website and social media.
- Plan positive behavior rewards for the year.
- Plan an event to meet new staff.
- Organize new employee orientation.
- Review/develop alternative schedules (i.e., half day, early/late release).
- Review code of conduct and discipline plan with all community members.
- Work with support staff to anticipate and welcome students who might struggle with the transition back to school.
- Hold parent/family meetings with students with attendance/behavior concerns to establish a solid working relationship up front.
- Schedule safety drills.
- Communicate updated health protocols.
- Register for AWSP's Launching School Leadership Series for school leaders in year one, year two, or newly assigned. (See August Pro Learning and Resources.)

Student Leadership

- Join or renew your AWSL Membership.
- Connect with AWSL if you are/have a new advisor in your building.
- Purchase AWSL curriculum and resources.
- Register for ASB finance workshops for advisors, administrators, bookkeepers, and students.
- Register for AWSL's Equity and Awareness Training for school teams.
- Book AWSL's Reimagining Recess programs for your elementary school.
- Book a beginning of the year retreat at Cispus.
- Adults: Register for the National Conference on Student Activities.
- Secondary: Encourage students to join the AWSL Student Voice Network.

Culture

Building Relationships Challenge



Plan a parent/guardian meeting for those who will be new to the school along with the parents of the students transitioning in. Include communication between school/home, code of conduct, athletics, and parent involvement opportunities.

Leave a note and a small gift (piece of candy, fun school supply item, t-shirt, etc.) in the staff mailboxes on the first day. The note can be a preprinted cardstock bookmark with a welcome message and key reminders.

Greet families and students as they arrive. Make sure school counselors provide buddies/student mentors to new students.

For your first staffulty meeting of the year, break the ice with a photo sharing game. Ask each individual to pull out their phone and select one of their favorite photos from the summer. Then, tell them to find someone they don't know well in the room and share the photo and explain why it's their favorite. After 3-5 minutes, have them find a new partner and share, and so forth. If someone doesn't have a phone picture, they can simply provide a verbal description of their favorite summer moment and why.

Belonging Challenge

Review data on all the various diverse cultures that exist within your learning organizations (staff and students). How do you acknowledge and celebrate their cultural backgrounds (holidays, etc.)?

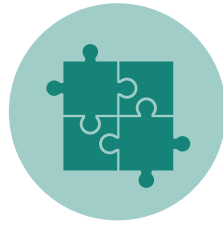
Student Centeredness

- Conduct/oversee new student orientation.
- Conduct opening day student assembly to reaffirm expectations, vision, etc.
- Prepare and distribute student accommodations (IEPs, 504, etc.) as well as allergy and medication lists for teachers and other appropriate staff.
- Schedule hearing and vision screenings.

Traditions/Celebrations

- Plan assemblies and special events (i.e., Homecoming, dances, etc.).

Systems



Vision/Mission

- Prepare school opening inspirational remarks for staff. Be prepared to reaffirm the shared vision for the school.
- With school improvement team, finalize school improvement goals and objectives and improvement plans for the school year based on state student achievement data from the previous school year.

Communication

- Send letters to students with schedules for opening day.
- Using multiple means (registration materials, social media outlets, local newspaper, community agencies, etc.), share information about free and reduced breakfast and lunch programs and encourage all that are eligible to participate.
- Send a parent/guardian letter, email, social media, or website message the first week with a welcome and any important dates/reminders for the first week of school. Emphasize immunization exclusion information. Include a personal invitation to the school's Open House.
- Review school website to ensure annual calendar and staff information is current.
- Post laminated directional signs in hallways and classrooms to help students find their classrooms. Ensure important information is posted in classrooms and around the school. For example, opening day bell schedule.
- Prepare announcements that need to be made to open the day. Provide reminders for staff regarding forms that may need to be distributed and collected from the students.
- Prepare opening remarks for first day assembly.
- Develop staff group text, email, and/or emergency telephone list (staff only).
- Post all programs, performances, meetings, and athletic events on the district calendar.
- Ensure that all parents/guardians and students receive the student handbook.
- Distribute staffulty handbooks to appropriate staffulty members and collect acknowledgment of receipt forms. Review key provisions with appropriate staffulty members.
- Conduct Open House/Back-to-School Night.
- Meet with key school committees, coaches, and team members to finalize plans for the upcoming school year.
- Working with sponsors/coaches, meet with fall extra-curricular participants and parents/guardians to review rules and code of conduct.
- Create "Who is in charge when the principal is out of the building" list and distribute to staffulty.

Collaborative Leadership

- Working with leadership team, prepare for Open House/Back-to-School Night.
- Working with appropriate individuals, prepare for fall field trips. Obtain School Board approval if necessary.
- Schedule meetings (principal/staffulty) with all key groups to discuss concerns, needs, and goals for the year.
- Meet with school counselors to review policies for college visits, standardized testing, identifying kids who are not on track, providing scholarship information, social-emotional support, etc. Ensure all known testing and activity dates have been submitted for inclusion in the central school calendar.
- Meet with cafeteria staff to discuss the upcoming year, review PBIS cafeteria routines.
- Meet with transportation staff to discuss the upcoming year. Review student discipline procedures, consider reviewing PBIS bus routines.
- Meet with athletic director to ensure the coaches' handbook and training sessions have been finalized, fall schedules/contracts with opponents and officials have been verified, and all known activity dates have been submitted for inclusion on the central school calendar.
- Meet with fine arts director and club and class sponsors to ensure all known activity dates have been submitted for inclusion in the central school calendar and fund-raising activities have been approved.

Safety

- Review school safety plans with staff. Ensure emergency systems are in order.
- Review updated student handbooks with all staff members (instructional and non-instructional).
- Finalize dates for fire, disaster, and emergency drills. Communicate protocols to staff and parents/guardians.
- Ensure all staffulty have access to mandated training courses.

(Continued on next page)

Operations

- Conduct final building walk-through with head of maintenance including sport fields and facilities.
- Review budget needs and expenditures.
- Review first day procedures with transportation, first day count, etc.
- Ensure all needed supplies have been received and teachers have what they requested.
- Ensure facilities are reserved and ready for concerts and other extracurricular activities.
- Prepare fall event coverage schedule including sports, fine arts, etc.
- Ensure athletic director and coaches have completed all required WIAA training (concussion, etc.).
- Provide training for individuals handling money (ticket sales, concession stands, fundraising, etc.) to ensure district policies and procedures are followed.
- Finalize all fall athletic/fine arts transportation schedules.
- Schedule fall activity photos.



- Distribute documentation on evaluation timelines.
- Define and communicate protocol for formal and informal classroom observations and walkthroughs. Review CBA and ensure this aligns with district expectations.
- Ensure staff members have a copy of their specific evaluation instrument.
- Ensure all teaching credentials are registered.
- Visit all classrooms to connect, offer encouragement, and provide assistance. Give particular attention and time to new teachers.
- Meet with new teachers weekly during the first month of school to share/clarify information and gather feedback.

Reflection and Growth

- By the first day of student attendance, obtain and review the administrative evaluation tool for the year. If you will be evaluating school leaders (assistant principals, deans, etc.), ensure you have issued them the written notice of evaluation as well as the rubrics and ratings matrix.
- If you are new to supervising an assistant principal, you are required to register for the two-day AWSP Leadership Framework training. Find details at www.awsp.org/framework.

Learning

Instruction

- Spend time in the classroom early and often to identify struggling teachers and provide support as needed for success. Consider walkthroughs during non-instructional times to build relationships with staff as well.
- Review school's instructional playbook (key instructional strategies, procedures—"What we should always see," "What we might see, What we should never see," etc.) with staff.

Assessment

- Review assessment calendar with staff.

Human Capital Management

- Review updated enrollment for any necessary staffing changes.
- Prepare a substitute teacher availability list. Have teachers prepare substitute folders and emergency lesson plans.
- Conduct required staff state mandated trainings.
- Conduct new staff orientation.
- Conduct substitute teacher orientation, build relationships with your guest teachers ahead of the year. Cover school wide expectations and how to ask for help/support when in the building.
- Review district evaluation policy and procedures with all staff members (instructional and non-instructional).

“The best leaders are those who inspire others to dream more, learn more, do more, and become more.”

- John Quincy Adams

August



Self-Assessment

Consider completing the AWSP Leadership Framework self-assessment. Visit www.awsp.org/framework to access the Self-Assessment and Reflection Tool and other Framework tools.

Connecting to the AWSP Leadership Framework

- 1 Creating Culture:** Prepare powerful welcome back activities for your students, staff, and community.
- 2 Ensuring School Safety:** Develop/modify and review school safety plans with staff.
- 3 Planning with Data:** Review previous year data and create a plan for improvement or talking points for back-to-school with teachers.
- 4 Aligning Curriculum:** Give your staff the gift of time to curriculum map based on the identified standards.
- 5 Improving Instruction:** Model strong instruction as you prepare and plan your kickoff staff days.
- 6 Managing Resources:** Prepare, prepare, prepare for your most precious resource: students and staff. How will they know they will be well cared for?
- 7 Engaging Families and Communities:** Use social media to promote your message, reminders of events, etc.
- 8 Closing the Gap:** Use your “gap analysis” as the driver of your back to school events with all community members.

WHAT SHOULD YOUR PRINCIPAL SUPERVISOR BE ASKING YOU RIGHT NOW?



August Focus: Culture Building & Systems Alignment

“How are you setting the tone for a positive, inclusive school culture as staff and students return?”

“In what ways are your operational systems (schedules, communications, safety, etc.) setting staff up for success from day one?”

August



SCHOOL LEADER *Tips for You*

Procedures, procedures, procedures! Take the time up front to set procedures you'd like to use throughout the year. Make sure staff who are new and returning are aware. Often we continue to hire new staff members as the year is starting. Be sure these folks know the procedures too.

Revisit or redevelop your shared vision and build your purpose around it. Have clear goals based on your vision. Create a plan for the year to assess possible student skill or academic gaps and intervene or spiral in those skills appropriately.

Meet the students where they are! Celebrate the return of school and acknowledge the *esprit de corps*...we are in this together!

PRACTICAL WISDOM:

Learning Renewal...

In the post-COVID era, schools are still struggling to address the learning loss that occurred during that time. Use these questions to reflect as you continue to build back learning that was lost.

Learning Renewal Questions

- What data do we have which will allow us to analyze the current performance of our students? Are we consistently looking at both formative and summative data? Are we lacking data that we need to consider collecting?
- How can we simplify the planned curriculum to allow for quality catch up of core components?
- What remedial tutoring programs are needed to support students, especially marginalized students? Could some of the remedial work be accomplished remotely using technology before and/or during the school year?
- What changes should be made to our building schedule or school calendar to meet students' learning needs?
- What education partners can play a role in the learning recovery process: teachers, other educational professionals, volunteers, peers?
- What supports are needed for teachers to adapt to the learning demands? Time for planning? Materials? Professional learning?
- How do we keep parents/guardians informed about learning levels and student progress? How are we engaging with parents/guardians as partners in their student's education?
- How do we ensure we are having honest and transparent conversations regarding our students' learning needs and how to meet them?
- What accelerated learning interventions are needed to address any learning loss that has occurred especially in the areas of literacy and numeracy?

Suggested First Faculty Meeting Activity

After thinking about the questions yourself, choose 3-5 for a discussion with your teachers and staff.

- Form small groups. Divide staff into groups of five by numbering off. Give each group a marker and a large sheet of paper to write their answers.
- Start the discussion. Everyone gets the same question and a set amount of time (about 5-7 minutes) to talk and write down their ideas. Give a one-minute warning before time is up.
- Share and build on ideas. Pick one group to share their answers using their chart. Then, ask other groups to add new thoughts or expand on what's already been said. Write down these ideas as you go.
- Repeat with a new question. Give each group a fresh sheet of paper and a new question. Follow the same process.
- Keep the conversation going. Encourage teams to continue these discussions in their grade level or department meetings by coming up with more questions to explore. Plan time in the next faculty meeting for groups to share what they discussed.

This activity helps everyone learn from each other and keeps important conversations going!

AUGUST: TELLING YOUR LEADERSHIP STORY

“Wins” for August

THANK-YOUS TO WRITE:

A LESSON LEARNED:

NEXT MONTH'S LEADERSHIP MOVES:

READING LIST:

Self-care plans for next month: