



Better **TOGETHER**

Leading with Purpose. Connecting with Heart.

SUMMER CONFERENCE
JUNE 28-30, 2026 | SPOKANE



CONFERENCE PROGRAM

Event Agenda

Annual AWSP/WASA Summer Conference

Saturday, June 27, 2026

AWSP and WSPEF Board Meetings

8:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: GH Cedar Ballroom

Marzano Framework (Day 1)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 10

MARZANO

This two-day training prepares evaluators of classroom teachers to apply the Marzano TPEP Framework. Participants will understand the research foundations of the framework and gain foundational knowledge and skills for observing and evaluating classroom instruction through the Marzano Framework. *Generously funded in part by OSPI.* Includes 12 Leadership clock hours (up to 4 CCDEI).

Speakers



Annie Wolfley

Educational Consultant | Education Consultant



Mark Gardner

Teacher | Camas School District

CEL Framework (Day 1)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 11

CEL

This two-day overview of the UW/CEL Instructional Framework and how it aligns with the state's teacher evaluation system is targeted to principals who are new to the process and have only limited experience with CEL 5D+. The intended audience is principals, assistant principals, and central office staff who evaluate teachers under the TPEP evaluation system and are new to the framework as an evaluator. *Generously funded in part by OSPI.* Includes 12 Leadership clock hours (up to 4 CCDEI).

Speakers



Whitney Meissner

Educational Consultant / CEL Lead | Edmonds School District



Gunnar Guttormsen

Director of Student Services | Kelso School District

Danielson Framework (Day 1)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 12

DANIELSON FRAMEWORK (DAY 1)

This workshop is for principals, assistant principals, central office staff in districts using the Danielson Instructional Framework. Those who evaluate teachers are required to complete Stage 1 and Stage 2 Framework training. Using the Danielson Framework, participants will increase their ability to support effective teaching using the state criteria, comparing their evaluation scoring with others for inter-rater reliability. Includes 12 Leadership clock hours (up to 4 CCDEI).

Speakers



Dr. Mindy Meyer

Director of Human Resources | Walla Walla School District



Winston Benjamin

Dean of Student | Renton School District

Better Together: Teacher & Student Growth Through Purposeful Evaluation Conversations (Day 1)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 2

In the updated statewide Student Growth Goal rubrics, principals and district administrators have a powerful opportunity to strengthen the relationships and conversations that drive meaningful improvement. In this two-day, highly interactive workshop, leaders will explore how intentional, inquiry-driven evaluation conversations cultivate trust, elevate educator strengths, and accelerate growth for both teachers and students. Together, we will practice updated tools aligned to the revised rubrics, deepen skills that support a culture of learning, and reinforce the belief that we are truly **better together**—when we listen, learn, and lead in partnership. A long-standing AWSP favorite, this session invites leaders at all levels to refine their practice, build stronger human connections, and foster school communities where growth is shared, supported, and celebrated. Includes 12 Leadership clock hours.

Speakers



Rebecca Lee

Principal | Summit Virtual Academy



Anzara Miller

Director of Educational Leadership & Development | CSTP

Government-to-Government

9:00 AM – 3:00 PM | Location: Grand Ballroom A

Generously funded in part by OSPI. This workshop will meet the following requirements for Administrator Recertification. House Bill 1426 (2022) mandates in renewing an administrator certificate on or after July 1, 2023, continuing administrators must attend a 5-hour Government-to-Government Relationships Training to focus on (each workshop names below are one hour):

- Introduction to Tribal Sovereignty in Washington State
- Boarding Schools and Historical Trauma
- Identifying Native Students in Public Schools
- Agents of Change: School Leadership Behaviors & Dispositions
- Creation of Government-to-Government Systems

Speakers



Maxine Alex

Tribal Consultation Program Supervisor | OSPI



Andrea French

Training and Technical Assistant Specialist | University of Montana



Jerad Koeppe

Native Student Program Specialist | North Thurston Public Schools



Dr. Kenneth Olden

Data & Assessment | Wapato School District



Dr. Michael Smith

Educator | Centralia School District

WASA Board Meeting

10:00 AM – 3:00 PM | Location: GH Birch Ballroom

WASA Executive Board Meeting/Lunch

12:00 PM – 1:00 PM | Location: GH Meeting Room 4

Sunday, June 28, 2026

WASA Rural Ed. Center Meeting

6:45 AM – 8:00 AM | Location: GH Meeting Room 11

The Leader's Playbook: Moving Your Team From "No" to "Let's Go" (WSIPC)

9:00 AM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 5

We invite you to bring a team to learn how to navigate the people side of change with confidence. Spend a day with us, diving deep into why resistance happens and how to overcome it. Leave with practical tools to apply to a change you are navigating, ready-to-use resources, and an action plan you can put into use immediately. Includes 6 Leadership clock hours.

Speakers



Dana Anderson

CEO | WSIPC



Lindsay Grams

Manager of Organizational Change | WSIPC



Kristen Johansen

Change Practitioner | WSIPC

Women in Leadership

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 3

The *Women in Leadership Network* invites current and aspiring school leaders to join us for an inspiring and interactive pre-conference session designed to connect, empower, and celebrate women in educational leadership. Rooted in the belief that every leadership journey deserves support and every destination is worth celebrating, this session will provide a powerful space to share stories, spark inspiration, and build meaningful connections with colleagues from across the state. Together, we'll explore the unique challenges and opportunities facing women leaders today—and how collective efforts can nurture hope, resilience, and authenticity in our work. Participants will engage in collaborative conversations, reflective activities, and networking designed to foster connection and professional growth. This session also introduces the statewide *Women in Leadership Network*—a growing community dedicated to increasing participation, retention, and support for women leaders through coordinated and collaborative efforts. Join us to be inspired, supported, and reminded of your strength and worth as a leader while helping shape the next chapter of this powerful statewide movement. Includes 3 Leadership clock hours.

Speakers



Mary Beth Tack

Superintendent | Kelso School District



Kim Doepker

Principal | Garrison Middle



Dr. Mary Templeton

Superintendent | Lake Stevens School District



Cindy Sholtys-Cromwell

Principal | Kelso Virtual Academy

Being Cool and Making It HIP: How to Lead High Impact Cultures of Connection, Engagement, and Belonging

9:00 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 1

An immersive leadership experience introducing the Cool + HIP framework to address disengagement and burnout. Participants gain practical tools to design high-impact student-centered programming that strengthens connection, engagement and belonging. Includes 3 Leadership clock hours.

Speaker



Carlos Ojeda Jr.

Motivational Speaker and Youth Development Expert | CoolSpeak

Danielson Framework (Day 2)

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Educational Consultant / CEL Lead | Edmonds School District



Gunnar Guttormsen

Director of Student Services | Kelso School District

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Speakers



Rebecca Lee

Principal | Summit Virtual Academy



Anzara Miller

Director of Educational Leadership & Development | CSTP

CANCELED: Leaders of Color Network: We are the Ones We've been Waiting For

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 3

This pre-conference is an intentional and healing space created *by and for* Leaders of Color across Washington State. Grounded in connection, collaboration, and collective power, this session offers leaders the opportunity to build authentic community across roles and regions, share real-time problems of practice, and engage in strategic dialogue around leadership for equity and justice.

Together, we'll explore the daily challenges of leading in schools and systems not built for our thriving — and share the tools, mindsets, and leadership moves that help us persist, resist, and grow. Facilitators representing diverse school levels (elementary, middle, high school, and district) will guide conversations rooted in real experience and shared purpose.

This space is also about *renewal* — reclaiming joy, practicing radical self-care, and making intentional connections that will sustain us during the conference and beyond. We'll close with a collective call to action: how do we protect our leadership, our communities, and our students during these unprecedented times?

Whether you're new to leadership or a seasoned veteran, this session is for you. Come as you are — and leave with community, courage, and a clearer path forward. Includes 3 CCDEI and/or Leadership clock hours, not to exceed 3 total clock hours.

Speakers



Dr. Wilnic Gideon

Principal | Eisenhower Middle School / Everett Public Schools



Dr. Jessica Gideon

Principal | Madison Elementary / Everett Public Schools



Kelly Niccolls

Executive Director of Teaching & Learning | Cheney School District



Bernadette Ray

Principal | Tacoma Public Schools



Susie Askew

Principal | Spanaway Lake High School



Kamrica Ary-Turner

Associate Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Stay in H.A.R.M.'s Way: Building Leaders, Managing Climate, Sustaining Culture

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: Meeting Rm 1

A practical leadership framework for improving school climate and sustaining culture. H.A.R.M. equips leaders to build staff capacity, increase influence, strengthen adult belief, and create systems that support excellence and retention. Includes 3 Leadership clock hours.

Speaker



Chris Collins

Speaker, Author, Sneakerhead | CoolSpeak

ERRN/SIRS Board Meeting

3:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: GH Meeting Room 6

Opening Session and Keynote Banquet: Brad Montague

6:00 PM – 8:30 PM | Location: CC Exhibit Hall C

Brad Montague, Author and Creator of the hit web series Kid President

Speaker



Brad Montague

Author and Creator of the hit web series Kid President

Brad Montague Book Signing

8:30 PM – 9:00 PM | Location: CC Riverside Lobby

Speaker



Brad Montague

Author and Creator of the hit web series Kid President

Monday, June 29, 2026

WASA Rural Ed. Center Meeting

6:45 AM – 8:00 AM | Location: GH Meeting Room 11

General Session with Carlos Ojeda Jr.: Don't Fight Back!

8:15 AM – 9:30 AM | Location: CC Exhibit Hall C

Speaker



Carlos Ojeda Jr.

Motivational Speaker and Youth Development Expert | CoolSpeak

Book Signing with Carlos Ojeda Jr.

9:30 AM – 10:15 AM | Location: The Commons Bookstore

Speaker



Carlos Ojeda Jr.

Motivational Speaker and Youth Development Expert | CoolSpeak

WCEAP Meeting

9:45 AM – 11:30 AM | Location: GH Meeting Room 10

Keep It Simple: How to Implement a Simple and Revolutionary Daily Intervention and Homework Support Plan for Middle School Students

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 402C

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

At Horizon Middle School, we've implemented Hawk Time, a daily 30-minute advisory period providing academic intervention in reading and math as well as support for homework completion. Students meet with the same teacher each day for either intervention or time to work on homework. A system is also in place so students can visit other teachers for specific homework help.

Hawk Time also supports social-emotional learning (SEL), class meetings, social minutes for students with IEPs, and school-wide activities like assemblies. Centralizing these activities reduces interruptions to core instruction while meeting varied student needs.

A key strength of Hawk Time is its simplicity: it can be implemented without extra funding and without disrupting your master schedule. Schools of any size can create this daily advisory using existing staff and resources, making it practical for supporting all students.

Parents love Hawk Time! Students and staff count on it daily. Students in intervention groups show measurable growth, and all participants value a predictable time for support and connection. Hawk Time strengthens student-teacher relationships and creates opportunities for learning and growth.

This session will explore the design and implementation of a daily 30-minute advisory for intervention and homework support. Attendees will leave with a clear understanding of how to create a simple daily advisory, including the steps we took, practical strategies, and lessons learned.

Speaker



Joshua Wolcott

Principal | Horizon Middle

Co-Speakers



Jason Francek

Assistant Principal | Horizon Middle



Jaime McMaster

Counselor/Principal Intern | Central Valley School District



Starla Fey

Teacher/Athletic Director | Horizon Middle School



Beth Weinrich

Teacher

Improving K-5 Math Instruction - We All Play a Role - Principal, Teacher, Team and Paraeducator

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 300B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Join Scot Curran, a nationally recognized math leader and former classroom teacher who has a proven track record of getting results with students. Scot will highlight how to intentionally embed high-impact, student-centered instructional strategies into a unit plan built around the new Washington State essential standards and supporting standards. Participants will walk away with concrete strategies that teachers, collaborative teams, and paraeducators can implement immediately to strengthen math instruction and increase student engagement. Through short, targeted video clips, Scot will also showcase numerous strategies in real classrooms—bringing effective math instruction to every K-5 classroom in your district.

This session will also highlight how principals lead math achievement work aligned to the essential standards and the work of their collaborative teams. If improving math achievement is a priority in your system, this is a session you won't want to miss.

Speaker



Scot Curran

National Math Consultant | Achievement Essentials

Co-Speaker



Annie Wolfley

Educational Consultant | Education Consultant

Leading with Purpose: Strengthening Schools Through Relational Leadership

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 402B

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Leadership is ultimately about people—how we show up, listen deeply, and create spaces where individuals feel seen, valued, and supported. In this session, participants will explore how emotional intelligence and trauma-informed leadership practices can strengthen staff morale, deepen student connection, and foster resilient, high-functioning school communities.

Drawing on the research of Vanessa Druskat and The Emotionally Intelligent Team, along with more than three decades of experience in education, this session will highlight the essential conditions that allow teams to thrive: trust, psychological safety, shared purpose, and collective accountability. Participants will reflect on how empathy, self-awareness, and relational leadership directly impact staff retention, collaboration, and well-being.

The session will also spotlight innovative, people-centered practices within a school community that elevate student voice, strengthen relationships, and reinforce a sense of belonging for all. Through practical examples, reflection, and shared dialogue, leaders will leave with actionable strategies to lead with intention, connect with heart, and build cultures where both adults and students can flourish—together.

Speaker



Jeff Baines

Principal | Sumner High

Thriving and Growing: Personalized Learning and Support for Leaders

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 402A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Sharing leadership begins with learning together. Through collaboratively exploring dreams, data and hopes for the future, school systems can make powerful gains- but it takes courage. Hear about the journey of a school district leadership team changing what it means to be part of a professional learning community. This approach to layering continued, collaborative practice throughout the school system starts with administrators modeling their own vulnerability and deep engagement in a continuous, individualized growth process.

The superintendent-principal relationship is the foundation of how these leaders are infusing an approach to professional learning communities throughout the district that is meaningful and personalized. Intentional strategies for developing a learning plan that supports the active leadership of every member of the school community will be explored. The elements of mentoring and coaching that help principals the most will be shared from the perspectives of both the building principal and superintendent. Structured discussion in small groups will facilitate developing the first steps of a plan for each participant to apply elements of this approach to their own practice.

Speaker



Ingrid Colvard

Superintendent | Stevenson-Carson School District

Co-Speakers



Sarah Dodson

Elementary Principal | Carson Elementary School



Teresa Burns

Principal | Stevenson Carson School District

Building Shared Leadership: A Pathway to Improving Student Outcomes, Elevating Voice, and Enhancing Student Experience

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 401C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Strong schools are built on shared leadership, not isolated decision-making. We will highlight how an administrative team's intentional commitment to shared leadership can improve student outcomes, elevate voice, and strengthen the student experience.

Participants will learn how a unified administrative team grounded in shared core values models collaboration, trust, and collective responsibility. The presentation outlines leadership structures that support teacher agency and distributed leadership, including Professional Learning Communities (PLCs), an Instructional Leadership Team, and a Building Leadership Team. These systems create clarity, coherence, and ownership while keeping student learning at the center of school improvement efforts.

Equally important, this session focuses on empowering student voice and agency as drivers of school culture and instructional growth. Participants will learn how structures such as the ASB Executive Board and the Principal's Advisory Council, along with student and parent instructional rounds, gather authentic feedback and strengthen partnerships. These practices elevate stakeholder voice, build transparency, and foster a culture where students and staff feel valued and heard.

Through practical examples and reflection, principals will leave with actionable strategies to build leadership capacity, enhance school culture, and create systems that empower adults and students in pursuit of meaningful outcomes.

Speaker



Matt Carlson

Principal | Orting High School

Co-Speakers



Tia-Michelle Marquez

Assistant Principal | Orting High School



Chris Hunke

Assistant Principal | Orting High

A Cultural Shift within an Organization around Professional Boundaries

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 401A

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

This session will emphasize the critical importance of maintaining clear and professional boundaries between teachers/school staff and students within the educational environment. Educators hold a position of trust and influence, and it is imperative that the highest standards of conduct are upheld to ensure the safety, well being, and development of all the students. Establishing and maintaining professional boundaries is not only essential for protecting students from potential harm, but also for safeguarding the integrity and reputation of all staff and educational institutions. Inappropriate or ambiguous interactions, even if well-intentioned, can lead to misunderstandings, ethical breaches, and legal consequences. By investing in clear guidelines and continuous education, we not only protect our students and staff but also foster a culture of professionalism, respect, and accountability.

Speaker



Rick Doehle

USIP Pool Administrator | Clear Risk Solutions

Co-Speaker



Rich Moore

Pool Administrator | School Insurance Association of Washington (SIAW)

Better with AI: Practical Strategies for Enhancing Your Leadership

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 300C

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

Learn to leverage a healthy partnership with the latest AI tools for expanding leadership creativity and increasing efficiency. Participants will leave this action-packed session with an interactive agenda filled with access to resources you can put to use immediately.

Together, we will explore the most current and high-impact ways AI is transforming leadership practice.

Participants will engage in hands-on activities that model how school and district leaders can turn emerging AI tools into time-savers, thought partners, and quality-improvement systems. Whether you're a beginner or an experienced user, you'll leave with ready-to-implement AI routines that align with evolving best practices.

Speaker



Kim Fry

Assistant Executive Director - Learning Innovation & AI | WASA

From Listening to Legitimacy: How Authentic Engagement Drives Trust-Powered Change

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 303B

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Strong school systems depend on highly engaged students, families, communities, and business partners. Yet engagement itself isn't the end goal—it's a first step toward the deeper outcomes of shared understanding, alignment, and ultimately, trust.

In 2026, community trust isn't a "soft" outcome; it's a foundational pillar of school system health and a prerequisite for sustainable leadership. Because without trust, progress in all other areas is fragile.

In this joint session, WASA leadership and trusted voice-to-action partner ThoughtExchange explore what makes community engagement authentic rather than a box-ticking exercise.

Participants will learn how modern listening practices—including AI-enabled engagement—help leaders achieve their most complex goals.

From strategy and policy development to program funding, schedule reviews, and school safety, leaders will walk away with the tools and confidence to ensure their engagement is authentic, trust-building, and sustainable for school systems into the future.

Speaker



Jeff Snell

Executive Director | WASA

Co-Speaker



Dave MacLeod

CEO | ThoughtExchange

PLC: Eliminate Singletons Through Standards Based Collaboration

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 303A

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

Speaker



Matthew Kesler

Principal | River HomeLink Battle Ground SD

Louder Than a Suggestion Box: Maximizing Student Voice in Schools!

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 300A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Student voice should be more than a survey, a suggestion box, or a single leadership class. In this engaging and practical session, principals and district leaders will explore how to intentionally grow student voice across the K–12 continuum using the Five C's: Context, Connection, Communication, Culture, and Choices.

Grounded in the work of the Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL), this workshop brings real examples from schools across Washington and beyond, showing how student voice can be developmentally appropriate, inclusive, and deeply connected to school culture. Participants will examine where student voice thrives, where it often gets quiet, and what leadership moves can amplify it at every grade level.

Speaker



James Layman

AWSL Director | Association of Washington Student Leaders

The Principalship-Leading with vision and purpose

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 302A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

This interactive and reflective session explores the role of the modern day principal. Participants will engage in meaningful dialogue about leadership philosophies and practical, real world strategies, guided by insights from an experienced practicing principal.

Speaker



Jason Smith

Principal | Gov John R Rogers High

Reflective Leadership on Indigenous Land: Embracing Place, Presence, and Responsibility in Washington Schools

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 302B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Washington State is home to 29 federally recognized tribes, each with rich histories and enduring sovereignty. While many schools may have small or no Indigenous student populations, every school sits on Indigenous land. This session invites school leaders to engage in deep reflective practice centered on the land acknowledgment—not as a ceremonial formality, but as a transformative leadership practice that fosters humility, relational accountability, and equity.

Participants will explore how recognizing the Indigenous lands beneath their schools can serve as a powerful catalyst for self-reflection on leadership roles, institutional histories, and educational equity. Through interactive reflection and dialogue, leaders will consider how to move beyond token acknowledgments toward authentic relationships with local tribes and Indigenous communities, even when Indigenous students are few

Speaker



Dr. Ralph Watkins

Superintendent | Wahkiakum School District

Shifting the Conversation from Evaluation to Ongoing Growth

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 300D

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Are you looking for the best way to get everyone rowing in the same direction and speaking the same language of leadership? Look no further than the culture of reflection and growth created in the Cheney School District. Come learn how Superintendent Dr. Ben Ferney embraced, embedded, and brought to life the full suite of School Leader Paradigm resources created by AWSP. Everyone is a school leader. Everyone speaks the same language of leadership. Everyone is engaged in an ongoing reflective improvement cycle from assistant principals to the superintendent and everyone in between.

Speakers



Scott Seaman

Executive Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)



Ben Ferney

Superintendent | Cheney Public Schools

A New Hope in Action: Aligning Vision and Trust to Lead Collaborative Change

10:00 AM – 10:50 AM | Location: 401B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

At Sand Point, our leadership journey began with a simple but powerful message: *A New Hope*. What started as a thematic anchor, inviting staff to imagine themselves as heroes in a shared saga which became the foundation for a collective leadership model rooted in trust, clarity of vision, and shared responsibility. This session explores how purposeful storytelling, aligned change theory, and distributed leadership have transformed our culture from compliance to collaboration.

Through intentional systems work: revitalizing PLC structures, co-creating instructional visions, and empowering teacher-led teams, we cultivated “many hands” committed to a unified mission rather than isolated efforts. Using principles from Kotter’s Change Theory, KMO gap analysis, and Adaptive Leadership, we built urgency around opportunity, formed guiding coalitions across roles, and anchored new practices in celebration and feedback loops.

Participants will engage with practical tools and reflective protocols used at Sand Point to align vision across teams, build relational trust, and sustain momentum through joyful accountability. Together, we’ll examine how strategic hope, when paired with structures and voice, becomes more than inspiration, it becomes infrastructure. Attendees will leave with strategies to foster buy-in, honor collective expertise, and lead change that feels shared, supported, and deeply human.

Speaker



Stephanie Zikopoulos

Renton School District

Eastern WA Quality Schools Coalitino

10:15 AM – 11:45 AM | Location: GH Meeting Room 11

When the Money’s Gone but the Mission Isn’t: Leading School Improvement Through Scarcity, Cuts, and Change

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 302A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

What happens when resources dwindle, staff positions are cut, and attendance is low? At Jemtegaard Middle School (JMS), we shifted our focus from what we lacked to what we had. The result? Some of the highest reading and writing growth in the state, a significant increase in student safety, and a dramatic decrease in suspensions.

This presentation shares the journey of how JMS “Jemtegaard-ed the heck” out of systemic challenges by building staff capacity to solve problems and maximize student growth.

Participants will walk away with:

-

The "Jemtegaard Framework": Strategies for building a collective staff identity centered on internal problem-solving rather than external reliance.

- **High-Growth Literacy Tactics:** Inexpensive, teacher-led instructional shifts that drove state-leading growth in reading and writing.
- **Culture & Safety Systems:** Low-cost, high-impact strategies for improving student behavior and safety through relational trust and shared expectations.
- **Resource Maximization:** Lessons on how to audit and leverage existing talent and time when traditional funding is stripped away.

We share our experience not as a blueprint, but as an honest account of how our school navigated scarcity through collaboration, reflection, and steady, student-centered work. We also look forward to learning and collaborating with others as we continue to grow and improve.

Speaker



David Cooke

Principal | Jemtegaard Middle School

Co-Speaker



Tiffany McCormick

Associate Principal | Washougal School District

MTSS Makerspace -Principals Better Together

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 401A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

This interactive session invites school leaders to work collaboratively to strengthen MTSS systems using Washington's MTSS Framework. Rather than a traditional sit-and-listen format, participants engage in structured conversations, hands-on activities, and colleague-to-colleague problem solving that support the whole child across academic, behavioral, and social-emotional domains.

Leaders will explore key elements of MTSS, clarify what implementation looks like in real school settings, and identify tools and structures they can bring directly to their teams. Activities include prior-knowledge mapping, tiered-support sorting, World Café discussions, and reflection using the Cycle of Implementation. Participants walk away with practical implementation strategies—including approaches for data collection, staff learning and support, and communication with families—to strengthen and guide their MTSS efforts. They also gain a network of colleagues committed to continuous improvement and shared learning as they build systems where every student is known, supported, and able to thrive.

Speaker



Kim Doepker

Principal | Garrison Middle

Co-Speaker



Heidi Fagerness

Chehalis Middle/ AWSP GLLC Middle Level Chair

High Performance Leadership: Why Principals Must Train, Recover, and Compete Like Elite Athletes

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 302B

LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND REFLECTION

School leaders operate in one of the most demanding, emotionally complex, and fast moving professions. Yet principals are rarely encouraged or taught how to care for themselves with the same intentionality that elite athletes bring to their training. This session explores a powerful metaphor: principals as high performance athletes. Just as athletes build routines around preparation, strategic rest, coaching, and team culture, effective principals must cultivate habits that sustain their performance, purpose, and connection to others.

Participants will examine the research behind cognitive load, recovery cycles, and team based resilience, while learning practical strategies to build systems of support within their leadership teams. Grounded in the conference theme Better Together: Leading with Purpose and Connecting with Heart, this session emphasizes that thriving schools begin with thriving leaders. When principals invest in their own preparation and wellness and build collective practices that support one another, everyone in the school community benefits.

Speaker



Tim Fox

Principal | Hockinson High

Making Learning Cohesive For All Students - A Framework For Strengthening And Solidifying Long-Term Learning Across The System

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 303A

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

Learning is cohesive when all of the pieces come together to create accelerated growth/ achievement. This happens when 3 things come together- learning of rigorous content, access to the content, and long term retrieval. In this session, we'll discuss a framework for Cohesive Learning, along with systems/structures designed to increase Cohesive Learning within and across schools for ALL students.

We'll share 3 Factors that determine Cohesive Learning: 1-Building Background Knowledge; 2-Strengthening Content/Learning; 3-Solidifying/Consolidating Learning.

Some students access instruction without effort. They are provided rich knowledge, and they can connect learning and remember it. Our current system is designed to provide the greatest benefit to these students. Yet, there are others who have less access to content, learn less each day, and remember less.

Cohesive Learning focuses on content/instruction, and on the Factors that increase access to learning and promote remembering. Brain/learning research describes a learning process that involves building complex neural networks, which aid in more efficient learning. Cohesive Learning is founded on the idea that networks can be built, made to interconnect, strengthened, and reinforced.

Participants will leave the session having learned about how administrators and teachers can work together to strengthen Cohesive Learning across the system (aiding in relevance, applicability, and potential sustainability).

Speaker



Angie Franklin

Director for Teaching and Learning | University Place School District

Co-Speaker



Jeff Loupas

Deputy Superintendent | University Place School District

Doing the Hard Parts of School Leadership Better: Using AI to Strengthen Systems, Structures, and Collective Practice

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 303B

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

School leaders are navigating unprecedented operational complexity—staffing shortages, scheduling challenges, communication overload, and constant decision pressure—often at the expense of time for instructional and transformational leadership. This interactive workshop reframes artificial intelligence (AI) not as a shortcut or replacement for professional judgment, but as a systems-level support that can reduce cognitive load, strengthen sensemaking, and surface collective wisdom.

Participants will engage in a cycle of inquiry grounded in real leadership work. Leaders will identify a high-friction problem of practice (such as substitute coordination, master scheduling, or leadership communication), map the system surrounding it, and examine where AI can support analysis, planning, and reflection—without replacing human decision-making or relational leadership.

Through guided activities, participants will practice a simple, repeatable “agent-style” prompting approach designed for leadership contexts, focused on clarifying goals, organizing information, and supporting collective thinking. Structured reflection will help leaders consider how reclaiming operational capacity creates space for instructional leadership, equity-focused decision-making, and resilient leadership practice.

The session emphasizes practical application, ethical use, and alignment with school leadership values, offering leaders concrete strategies they can adapt immediately within their own contexts.

Speaker



Scott Friedman

Associate Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Co-Speakers



Erica Crane
Associate Professor | sideby



Mike Mendelson
CTO | sideby

Transforming Leadership Through Partnership: Renewal, Hope and Optimism

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 300D

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Leadership reaches its fullest potential when in partnership with others. In Capital Region ESD 113, we have successfully created meaningful opportunities for members of WASA focus on Hope, Renewal and Optimism through engaging activities, planning, advocacy and job-embedded professional development. This interactive workshop will leave participants with concrete tools that enhance their leadership.

Speaker



Flip Herndon
Superintendent | Capital Region ESD 113

Co-Speakers



Lisa Grant
Superintendent | Centralia School District



Clint Endicott
Superintendent | Tenino School District

Resilience & Technology: Leading Through Change

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 401B

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

Technology is evolving faster than ever, and school leaders must navigate innovation while fostering a strong school culture — without feeling overwhelmed. This interactive session will explore how education leaders have adapted to past technology shifts and provide practical strategies for tackling today’s digital challenges, from A.I. in student work to misinformation and evolving school policies. Through real-world examples, engaging discussions, and hands-on activities, attendees will strengthen their leadership skills and ensure their school’s approach to technology remains proactive, not reactive.

Speaker



Jeannelle Johnson
The Social Institute

Leading Together: Building a Districtwide Principal PLC for Sustainable School Improvement

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 300C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

How can a group of high school principals transform isolated leadership into a districtwide engine for collective improvement? The principals of Vancouver Public Schools’ six high schools will share their journey in developing a District Principal Professional Learning Community (PLC) dedicated to driving school improvement and improving student outcomes.

Grounded in the belief that *we are better together*, our PLC focuses on aligning leadership practices while honoring the unique culture of each school. Through consistent collaboration, trust-building, and shared accountability, we’ve developed structures that sustain meaningful dialogue, data-informed decision-making, and mutual support across diverse contexts.

Participants will engage in interactive discussion, reflection, and application, exploring how to create or strengthen principal-level PLCs that promote coherence, reduce isolation, and lead to measurable impact. This session models the power of authentic collaboration—showing how principals can collectively lead systemic change that centers equity, engagement, and results for all students.

Speaker



Andy Meyer

Principal | Skyview High

Co-Speakers



Darby Meade

Principal Columbia River High School | Columbia River High



Amber Beardmore

Principal | Hudson's Bay High School



Joseph Accuardi-Gilliam

Principal | Vancouver School of Arts & Academics



Luis A. Castro-Quintanilla

Principal | Fort Vancouver International High School

Skipper's Playbook: Creative Strategies for Student Buy-In

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 402A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

As high school administrators, we have witnessed firsthand the transformative power of fostering connectedness within our schools. In this session, we will share strategies that integrate Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports (PBIS) with intentional student engagement practices to create a culture where all students feels seen, valued, and supported. Our approach emphasizes proactive relationship-building, consistent expectations, and authentic opportunities for student voice. By aligning PBIS frameworks with engagement initiatives, we have reduced disciplinary incidents, increased attendance, and strengthened school climate. Participants will leave with actionable tools to implement tiered supports that prioritize connection over compliance, ensuring students thrive academically and socially.

This session will highlight real-world examples from a high school setting demonstrating how collaborative leadership can drive change. We will explore data-driven decision-making, staff training models, and student-led programs that reinforce positive behaviors while deepening engagement. Attendees will engage in discussions and walk away with practical resources to replicate these successes in their own schools. Our goal is to empower administrators to move beyond traditional discipline and toward a holistic approach that nurtures belonging and resilience. Together, let's create environments where connectedness is not an initiative but a lived experience for every student.

Speaker



Katherine Redman

Assistant Principal | Mount Si High School, Snoqualmie Valley School District

Co-Speakers



Krista Lallemand

Assistant Principal | Mount Si High



Jessica Easthope

Assistant Principal | Mount Si High



Kirk Dunkel

Assistant Principal | Mount Si High School

Unpacking the Small & Rural School Efficiency Study

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 401C

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

WASA, WSSDA, REC, and AESD have partnered with Hanover Research on a five-part, year-long study focused on the efficiency of our state's small and rural schools. These districts are the backbone of their communities, providing close-knit learning environments, vital services, and local leadership. And, they routinely demonstrate creative, cost-effective approaches to serving students well.

The study was run in five phases:

1. **Multi-Role Administrators: Case Studies & Interviews**
2. **Cooperative Agreement Strategies: Case Studies**
3. **Effective Use of Educational Service Districts: Best Practices & Benchmarking**
4. **Statewide Approaches for Supporting Small & Rural Districts**
5. **Critical Services Priorities Analysis**

Participants will have the opportunity to learn more about the study, its findings, and some key recommendations for small and rural schools. Participants will also receive a full copy of the study.

Speaker



Tim Garchow

Assistant Executive Director | WASA

Better Together: Purpose Driven Student Leadership

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 402B

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

What started out as a simple introduction to AWSL in 2020 turned into a partnership that has led to increased student voice and leadership. St. Helens Elementary School has been intentional in looking for ways to leverage student voice for the purpose of increasing student leadership opportunities, decreasing student behavior, and improving academics. Come hear some of the systems that have been implemented at St. Helens Elementary School, how they have brought student voice to the table, and the impact it is making on the school's culture and climate, academic progress, and relationships.

Speaker



Stephanie Smith

Principal | St. Helens Elementary School, Longview School District

From Shelf to Shift: How Collaborative School Improvement Planning Can Spark Real Change

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 402C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

What would happen if your School Improvement Plan actually changed teaching and learning instead of collecting dust? This interactive session shows leaders how to leverage collective inquiry, Bernhard's data framework, and research-based change theory to co-design School Improvement Plans that guide daily practice and accelerate outcomes for all students. Participants will learn how to bring teams together around clear goals, shared ownership, and actionable monitoring routines that keep the work alive. Walk away with practical structures and systems that prove improvement doesn't happen alone. We are better when we build and change together!

Speaker



Tammy Unruh

Special Services Director- Secondary | Issaquah School Dist

From "All Means All" to Systemwide Action: What Washington's Leaders Are Teaching Us About Making Inclusion Stick

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 300B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Across Washington state, district and school leaders are deeply committed to inclusive education, yet our statewide WASA/AWSP research reveals a persistent gap between vision and daily practice. In this interactive session, participants will engage with key findings from a 2025 study and identify the leadership moves that distinguish systems making real progress from those that feel "stuck." This session centers on what leaders actually do: how they align principals and superintendents, organize systems around MTSS and UDL, build shared ownership across roles, and sustain inclusion through turnover and competing initiatives. Participants will analyze real leadership dilemmas, hear from colleagues, and leave with concrete actions they can take away immediately to strengthen inclusionary practices in their context. This session is designed for leaders who want to build coherent, durable systems that improve outcomes for all students.

Speaker



Amy Wright

WASA Professional Learning Support/Inclusionary Practices | WASA

2 – 4 – 6 – 8 Who Do We Appreciate! Fostering and cultivating a culture of appreciation in your school and/or program

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: 300A

KEYNOTE

The last few years have been pretty tough. Even though we give our all to overcome the various challenges our schools have faced for the students and communities we serve, we sometimes feel unappreciated and lose focus on the things that matter. So let's change that! During this session, participants will learn how to set up and execute a staff and/or student appreciation experience. We will learn the importance of being "grateful." Come to this session to laugh, possibly cry (sorry) and learn how to pay it forward and show them exactly who we appreciate.

Speaker



Carlos Ojeda Jr.

Motivational Speaker and Youth Development Expert | CoolSpeak

Association Lunches & Awards

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM | Location: Exhibit Halls

To attend the AWSP or WASA Luncheon, you should have selected the appropriate luncheon during registration. Lunch tickets are required for entry.

AWSP Luncheon: Exhibit Hall C

WASA Luncheon and Awards: Exhibit Hall B1

AWSP Luncheon

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

WASA Luncheon and Awards

12:15 PM – 1:30 PM

OSPI Learning Standards Review and Revision Project Updates

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 300D

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Get the latest updates on the learning standards review and revision project, including the final adoption of the Mathematics and English Language Arts Learning Standards and important timeline dates.

The session will focus on the implementation of the learning standards, technical supports being created and developed for districts, schools, educators and families to build a comprehensive and collaborative K-12 instructional system.

Examples of support for implementation, sample resources, and activities will be provided, along with activities and opportunities with our educational partners.

Speaker



Angela Allen

Executive Director of Educator Effectiveness | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

W.O.W. Goals : Setting and Achieving Culture Shifting Benchmarks for Your Campus

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 300A

KEYNOTE

WOW Goals stands for **Way Out of this World Goals**—because basic goals don't move culture. This workshop is about dreaming big, doing hard things, and building real systems to make those goals happen. It's an experience built to shift your mindset and your game plan.

Together we will redefine how you set goals, understand the power of a collaborative vision, and learn how to put a system behind them so you don't get lost after the hype dies down. You'll create your own 30/60/90-day plan, build in accountability, and even decide how you'll celebrate when you hit your milestones. This is about going beyond SMART goals — this is about goals that stretch you, scare you a little, and change lives. By the end, you won't just have a dream. You'll have a plan to get it done.

Speaker



Chris Collins

Speaker, Author, Sneakerhead | CoolSpeak

When Change Isn't Optional: Leading Adult Learning and Culture in the Age of AI

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 303B

LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND REFLECTION

Artificial intelligence is not arriving as a new initiative—it is already embedded in the daily work of educators and leaders. Unlike previous shifts in tools or practices, AI represents a fundamentally different context for leadership, learning, and change. Traditional change-management approaches—rollouts, pilots, and compliance-driven adoption—are insufficient when people are already experimenting, avoiding, or quietly relying on new technologies.

This interactive session invites school and district leaders to reframe AI not as a technical implementation challenge, but as an adult learning and organizational development challenge. Participants will explore how AI disrupts professional identity, expertise, and decision-making, and why this moment demands a renewed focus on learning culture, collective sensemaking, and reflective leadership.

Through guided reflection and structured dialogue, leaders will examine how collective knowledge can either block change ("we've seen this before") or serve as a catalyst for adaptation and deeper learning. Drawing on real-world "bright spots" from the field, participants will identify leadership moves that support inquiry, coherence, and instructional leadership without mandating tools or practices.

Leaders will leave with a clearer understanding of how to lead learning when change is already underway—by creating conditions for adult growth, shared meaning-making, and purposeful experimentation in an AI-saturated context.

Speaker



Scott Friedman

Associate Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Co-Speakers



Erica Crane

Associate Professor | sideby



Mike Mendelson

CTO | sideby

Leading Your District Through a Successful Migration

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 402C

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

This session guides district leaders through a successful migration from SMS 2.0 to Qmlativ, focusing on the supports and resources available to ensure a smooth transition. Participants will learn about the statewide migration team, project phases, and the essential roles within district project teams. The session highlights the Qmlativ Migration Discovery Website, which provides answers to common questions, outlines the migration journey, and offers direct support channels. Attendees will gain practical tips for assembling effective teams, managing timelines, preparing data, and engaging staff in learning the new system. The session concludes with actionable takeaways to help districts confidently navigate their migration and optimize outcomes for their communities.

Speaker



Jessica Gleason

SMS to Qmlativ Migration Program Manager | WSIPC

From Initiative Fatigue to Coherence: Aligning Student Supports for Prevention & Results

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 402B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Today's schools face complex challenges that require *comprehensive systems of student support* rather than individual interventions. This interactive workshop for school and district administrators will provide a cohesive framework to strengthen attendance, engagement, behavior, and mental health supports through a unified, equity-centered approach. Participants will explore high-impact practices and real-world tools that enhance school climate, reduce chronic absenteeism, promote 9th-grade success, and empower students as leaders in their own well-being. The session connects the dots across social-emotional learning and behavioral support best practices into a cohesive system of supports.

Speaker



Dixie Grunenfelder

Assistant Superintendent, Student Engagement & Special Programs | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Co-Speakers



Cienai Wright-Wilkins

Decatur High



Krissy Johnson

Assistant Director of Student Engagement & Support, Student Engagement & Special Programs Division | OSPI



Bridget Underdahl

Director of Student Engagement & Special Programs | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Leading Change: Building a community of practice to prevent restraint and isolation in schools

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 402A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Schools, OSPI, and educational partners across Washington are eliminating the use of restraint and isolation. Their efforts and innovation yield systems that engage district leadership, support staff, and prioritize dignity and healing-centered approaches. Learn practical tools and strategies to implement proven practices that effectively reduce restraint and isolation. Administrators and district leaders will explain how this work improves school climate; decreases absenteeism and suspensions; strengthens family engagement; and disrupts the school-to-prison pipeline.

Leaders with demonstrated success in isolation elimination and restraint reduction will share statistically significant data and lessons learned in a nonjudgmental and supportive learning

environment, with concrete tools for classroom, building, and district leadership. Post-session, participants will have access to ongoing support from a learning community of practice focused on belonging and safety.

This work is much more than teaching de-escalation or restraint holds. Crisis intervention is too late. Rather, implementing school and district-wide systems that provide supports, self-regulation tools, and social emotional learning for our most traumatized students prevents most classroom crisis. This work focuses high-leverage practices using student data, family feedback, student trigger analysis and collaborative problem-solving, and multi-disciplinary team collaboration.

Speaker



Andrea Kadlec

Attorney | Disability Rights Washington

Co-Speakers



Patrick Mulick

Director of Student Engagement | Auburn School District



Doua Kha

Student Behavior Support Program | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction



Cassie Watkins

Program Manager | True Measure Collaborative



Ashley Mariah Angele

Lead BCBA | Auburn School District

Engage, Inspire, Celebrate: Staff Culture Matters

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 401C

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

This professional development session teaches participants how to create a school culture that staff love by incorporating meaningful themes into their work. Attendees will explore strategies to engage and inspire staff, recognize colleagues' efforts, and celebrate successes in fun and impactful ways. The session includes interactive activities, including a game designed to practice recognizing peers implementing Tier 1 practices, demonstrating how themes can be woven into trainings, meetings, and daily interactions. Participants will leave with practical tools and ideas for using thematic approaches to foster a positive, collaborative, and motivating school culture where staff feel valued, supported, and energized.

Speaker



Katie Louie

Principal | Central Valley High School

Co-Speakers



Shannon McGowan

Assistant Principal | Central Valley High School



Jacquie Monks

Assistant Principal | Central Valley School District

Sustaining Inclusive Systems through Times of Change

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 300B

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

Across Washington and the nation, special education is undergoing significant shifts—driven by changes in research, law, funding, and expectations for inclusive schooling. For district and school leaders, this moment can feel complex, technical, or uncertain. This session is designed to cut through that complexity.

Participants will explore Washington's move away from the severe discrepancy model toward a multi-tiered system of supports and Response to Intervention (RtI), and what that shift means for instructional leadership, equity, and system coherence. Presenters will walk through the components of comprehensive inclusive education—what it looks like in practice, how it supports improved outcomes for all students, and why it requires intentional systems design rather than isolated initiatives.

The session will provide practical updates on key statewide supports, including the Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network (IPTN)—how districts can access coaching, funding, and partnership support—and the state's first-ever statewide IEP platform, with a focus on implementation, consistency, and family engagement.

Grounded in adult learning theory and systems change principles, this session emphasizes clarity, relevance, and actionable next steps. Participants will leave with a clearer understanding of *why* these shifts matter, *how* they connect to district priorities, and *what* leaders can do to navigate ongoing federal uncertainty while keeping students at the center.

Speaker



Tania May

Assistant Superintendent of Special Education | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Co-Speaker



Cassie Martin

Executive Director of Special Education | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Skilled Navigation of Difficult Conversations with Your Board

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 300C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Working productively with your school board requires skill, strategy, and finesse. This session will explore several challenging scenarios superintendents may encounter when working with their school board and community. Through interactive problem-solving, we'll walk through successful strategies for collaborative leadership, including working with new board members, navigating conflict, and depoliticizing community conversations.

Speaker



Tricia Lubach

Executive Director | WSSDA

Co-Speaker



Heather Curl

Director of Leadership Development | WSSDA

Shared Leadership: Leading with Student Voice

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 401A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Students are at the heart of the learning experience and can offer genuine insight into increasing engagement and a sense of belonging. Shared leadership efforts can successfully involve our students through strategically designed systems and routines. Providing opportunities to increase student involvement is a key to positive culture and growth. Participants will walk away with strategies for eliciting student voice with their elementary scholars igniting hope, connection, and joy.

Speaker



Celina Brennan

Principal | Salnave Elementary, Cheney Public Schools

Co-Speakers



Claire Soulek

Assistant Principal | Salnave Elementary



Meriah Peplinski

3rd Grade Teacher | Salnave Elementary

Crisis Communications for Today's Schools: What to Prepare Before an Emergency and How to Lead With Confidence

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 303A

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

No matter the size of your school or district, your community expects fast, accurate and compassionate communication when a crisis occurs. From safety incidents to weather emergencies and reputational challenges, how and when information is shared directly impacts student safety, staff confidence and public trust.

This session equips school leaders with the essential foundations of effective crisis communication. Participants will learn what must be in place *before* an emergency, how to build a crisis communications plan that actually works in real-world conditions, and how to maintain crisis readiness throughout the school year.

Attendees will leave with practical tools and templates they can use immediately, regardless of whether they have a dedicated communications team or are managing communications on their own.

Speaker



Jenny Weekes

Communications Strategist + Owner | Hartwood Communications

Co-Speaker



Delonna Halliday
Principal | Discovery Elementary

Before the Decision: A Shift-Left Approach to Change Communication

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 302B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Session Overview

Every school and district leader has heard it: “*No one tells us anything.*” The frustrating truth is that most leaders are communicating. They’re just starting too late.

This session introduces the **Shift-Left Communication Framework**, a research-grounded model that moves intentional communication into the phases of change where it can actually make a difference: before the announcement, while the decision is still in formation.

Borrowed from DevOps practice and aligned with implementation science, sensemaking theory, and leadership communication research, the framework reframes change communication not as a messaging task but as a strategic leadership practice that builds trust, reduces resistance, and produces fundamentally better outcomes for staff and organizations.

The Central Idea

Traditional organizational communication starts at Launch—the moment a change goes public. By then, decisions are made, structures are set, and staff are left receiving information rather than participating in meaning-making.

The Shift-Left framework introduces the concept of the **announcement threshold**: the instant a change moves from being developed internally to being experienced externally by staff. When leaders intentionally communicate across the stages *before* that threshold—Discover, Define, Design, and Validate—the announcement becomes confirmation rather than news. The “no one tells us anything” moment never arrives.

What Participants Will Explore

- Why common communication breakdowns (message drift, timeline blind spots, role fog) are symptoms of starting too late, not of poor messaging
- The eight-stage Shift-Left framework and what intentional communication looks like at each stage in a school or district context
- How early, staged communication builds the three dimensions of organizational trust: competence, integrity, and dependability
- How to navigate real barriers — confidentiality, uncertainty, fear of getting it wrong — without defaulting to silence
- A diagnostic activity: mapping a current change to the framework to identify what’s missing and what the next communication moment needs to accomplish

What Participants Will Leave With

A new mental model for when change communication should begin — and a practical framework they can apply immediately to changes already in motion or forming in their organization.

Speaker



Corrie Wilder
Director of Communications, Outreach, & Engagement | WSIPC

Carrying the Work, Carrying Ourselves: Navigating Equity Leadership as Leaders of Color

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 302A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Leaders of Color are often expected to lead equity work—not because they’re resourced, an expert and supported, but because of our identities. This expectation can come with deep emotional and political weight: the pressure to get it right, avoid causing harm, and representing entire communities, often without institutional backing or healing spaces.

This session holds space for reflection, strategy, and student-centered leadership rooted in equity, care, and sustainability. Together, we’ll name the tensions of being “called on” rather than called in, explore tools like the *Equity Guide* to stay grounded in our values, and surface sustaining practices that honor both our purpose and our humanity.

Come for the community, stay for the clarity—and leave with strategies to lead with care, courage, and integrity.

Speaker



Kamrica Ary-Turner

Associate Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Better Together: Designing a High-Impact Math Lab Through Braided Funding and Special Education Expertise

1:50 PM – 2:40 PM | Location: 401B

When general education and special education work as one system, the results speak for themselves. This session explores how one district leveraged braided funding streams and the instructional expertise of special educators to design a Math Lab serving all learners. Outcome data includes significant benchmark gains district-wide, with the strongest results for students with IEPs and BIPOC learners. Participants will review the research on math learning that grounded the program's design, and leave with a replicable model for cross-departmental collaboration and funding alignment strategies.

Speaker



Tammy Unruh

Special Services Director- Secondary | Issaquah School Dist

Improving administrative internship and mentorship systems and programs

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 302A

LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND REFLECTION

The research is clear that the principal is the #1 factor in school performance. And, the principalship is one of the most challenging, difficult, complex jobs in the nation and several aspects of principalship have changed since the turn of the century. Given the importance of the principal in determining student and school success, and the complexities of the principal role, we must examine and improve current systems of support and mentorship for aspiring Washington State principals.

Principals who work in schools with students experiencing the greatest need must be supported and retained to affect equitable outcomes. It is in the best interest of students, especially underserved students and schools, that principals remain in their positions for at least 5-7 years because it takes that long to change a school's outcomes for the better and establish systems that positively affect student achievement. Principal longevity is the #1 equity issue facing our schools.

Effective mentorship programs and internship experiences are critically important as we look to grow and train future school leaders. In this session Dr. Tom Adams will share research-based strategies for interns, aspiring principals, school district administrators, principals, and mentors, such that internship and mentorship programs and systems are improved to better support aspiring principals' successful tenures as principals.

Speaker



Dr. Tom Adams

Principal | Curtis Senior High School

From “No” to “Let’s Go!”: Leading the People Side of Change

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 300C

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Leading change is one of the most important—and challenging—parts of school leadership. The real work isn't the new initiative or system we're implementing; it's helping people navigate the emotions, uncertainties, and habits that make change hard. This session gives leaders a practical, energizing roadmap for guiding their teams from hesitation to genuine commitment.

Together, we'll explore why people resist change, how to recognize the signals early, and what leaders can do to break through barriers with clarity and compassion. You'll learn simple, high-impact strategies for building readiness, strengthening relationships, and turning moments of “No” into momentum.

Every attendee will leave with a **Quick-Start Guide to Understanding and Overcoming Resistance**—a powerful tool for assessing where individuals are in the change process and helping them move toward “Let's Go.”

If you're ready to grow your influence, strengthen your culture, and lead change with confidence, this session will give you the tools to start immediately.

Speaker



Dana Anderson
CEO | WSIPC

The Alphabet Soup of Agency & Association Support for Mathematics - We're here to help!

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 302B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

If your district is working to strengthen mathematics outcomes—and looking for clear, system-level leverage points—this session is designed for you.

Participants will explore the **core characteristics of high-impact district mathematics systems**, with attention to leadership practices, coherence, and conditions that support effective teaching and learning across schools. Rather than focusing on isolated programs, this session emphasizes how districts can align strategy, support, and resources to improve math outcomes over time.

The session will also provide a **practical overview of the mathematics supports available to districts**, including resources and services offered through WASA, Educational Service Districts (ESDs), and key partner organizations. Participants will leave with greater clarity about what support is available, how to access it, and how to leverage these offerings to meet their district's specific needs.

This session is ideal for superintendents, assistant superintendents, and other leaders seeking a clearer roadmap for strengthening mathematics systems and making strategic use of regional and statewide supports.

Speaker



Kim Fry
Assistant Executive Director - Learning Innovation & AI | WASA

Equity in Arts Education: By the Numbers

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 303A

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

This session will **explore trends, strengths, and gaps in arts education access** according to statewide data sets, including the **2025 "State of the Arts" survey** completed by Washington State principals. The last statewide arts education data was collected back in 2009, and this updated information will help educational leaders in understanding the landscape of arts programming throughout Washington schools and what it could mean for our students.

Participants will also have the opportunity to ask questions, discuss potential next steps, and explore arts-focused resources with leaders at the helm of arts education advocacy--ArtsEd Washington, Inspire Washington, and the Washington State Arts Commission (ArtsWA).

Speaker



Miranda Leigh Hein
Executive Director | ArtsEd Washington

Co-Speaker



Naho Shioya
Founder & Principal | SOZO Evolution LLC

AI Leadership in Practice: Reclaiming Time to Lead with Purpose and Heart

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 303B

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

School leaders face increasing demands for instructional leadership, equity-focused decision-making, and system coherence while navigating limited time and rising complexity. Aligned with the conference focus on leading with purpose and connecting with heart, this interactive session explores how artificial intelligence can be used ethically and strategically to *amplify leadership impact while reclaiming time for people-centered work*.

Grounded in real practices from two Washington principals, participants will examine how AI supports communication clarity, data analysis, professional learning design, feedback and coaching, and initiative coherence. The session also highlights how principals have collaborated with district leadership to develop shared procedures and policy guidance for responsible AI use, ensuring alignment and equity across systems.

Participants will see concrete examples of how leaders organize AI tools; efficiently summarize data; create newsletters, emails, welcoming communications; teacher evaluations; and professional development ideas; and even support basic website development. Each example is framed as a repeatable workflow designed to save time, reduce cognitive load, and strengthen leadership systems. Participants leave with practical strategies they can immediately adapt in their own contexts. No prior AI experience is required.

Speaker



Joseph Accuardi-Gilliam

Principal | Vancouver School of Arts & Academics

Co-Speaker



Andy Meyer

Principal | Skyview High

Building a Shared Vision for School Finance Reform: The UW-SUPES group

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 401B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

School district leaders and professional organizations often struggle to build consensus around state school finance legislative reform priorities, in part because local needs and context differ across school districts. Competing visions for improving K-12 education policy makes it difficult for state legislators to decide how best to move forward, especially during times of fiscal constraint. To help build a coherent and shared set of policy recommendations, school district superintendents from across the state formed a partnership with researchers at the University of Washington. The UW-Superintendents United for Partnerships for Equitable Schools, or UW-SUPES, has held five convenings since the group's formation in July 2024. Out of that work, the group has created three summary reports, a shared problem statement that outlines the deficits of school finance policy in Washington state, and a vision for improving the state's finance model. The purpose of this session is to share about the group's findings and solicit input on issues and strategies that the group should consider undertaking.

Speaker



David Knight

Associate Professor | University of Washington

Co-Speakers



Trevor Greene

Superintendent | Yakima Public Schools



Kelly Aramaki

Superintendent | Bellevue School District

Where Connection Actually Begins: Icebreakers worth your time!

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 300A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Fun is powerful when it is purposeful. In this lively, hands-on session, participants will experience engagement strategies that do more than fill time. They build relationships, surface voice, and strengthen culture.

Participants will experience activities they can immediately take back to their schools, while also unpacking how these moments support trust, communication, and belonging. Expect movement, laughter, and practical leadership tools that remind us school leadership is about people first.

Speaker



James Layman

AWSL Director | Association of Washington Student Leaders

Thinking Sideways: A Leadership Approach for Innovative Learning

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 401A

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

Predictable professional learning often leads to predictable patterns, like polite participation, limited risk-taking, and ideas that rarely travel beyond the meeting. Yet leaders are asking staff to think flexibly, collaborate deeply, and adapt to increasingly complex environments.

In this interactive session, participants will experience "Thinking Sideways," a divergent thinking model designed to shake up routine patterns and spark creativity, curiosity and shared ownership. Participants will move through both simple and complex thinking structures through the learner's lens, experiencing firsthand how ambiguity and multiple pathways can energize learning rather than stall it.

This session isn't about adding a new initiative, it's about how leaders model learning. Participants will leave with ready-to-use learning experience, fresh energy for professional learning, and a leadership tool that invites innovation without the eye-roll.

Speaker



Ronanda Liberty

Principal | Robert Olds Junior High

Amplify Your Leadership: Aligning Goals for Real Results

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 401C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Great leaders don't just set goals—they create momentum for lasting change. In this session, you'll learn how to leverage the AWSP Leadership Framework and student growth rubric language to craft goals that drive real results. Participants will explore practical steps and proven systems for aligning goals with leadership standards, monitoring progress effectively, and building structures that sustain improvement. By applying these strategies, leaders will amplify their influence on teaching and learning, foster accountability, and accelerate student success across classrooms, schools, and districts.

Speaker



Erin McKee

Principal | Issaquah School District

The Resilient Leader: Fueling Purposeful Change Through Vision, Heart, and Failing Forward

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 402A

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

In the face of relentless educational challenges—the kind that make you simultaneously laugh and question your life choices—sustainable change demands leadership that is both strategic and deeply human. This session presents a proven formula, developed and tested in an alternative school environment, that provides principals with practical frameworks applicable to *any* setting needing to make changes and innovate.

We will explore how to strategically leverage your district and school vision, including resources, ensuring alignment with district commitments, and preventing staff overwhelm. Simultaneously, we will delve into the heart of leadership, emphasizing how to foster a culture of resilience and innovation where "failing with reflection" is essential learning.

Participants will gain actionable strategies for nurturing staff through targeted improvement efforts, providing supportive resources, and mastering the balance between *pushing* for change and *allowing* for autonomy. Finally, we will examine best practices for authentic stakeholder inclusion—centering student voice, engaging families, and utilizing community resources—to ensure all innovative efforts are meaningful, inclusive, and student-centered. Join us for a session that is as inspiring as it is honest, peppered with a healthy dose of educational humor.

Speaker



Haley Naboychik

Principal | Ellensburg School District

Co-Speaker



Troy Tornow

Superintendent | Ellensburg School District

Women of Color: Get in Formation

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 402B

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

Women of Color, did you know the following:

- Less than ONE percent of educators overall identify as Native or Alaska Native.
- Black women comprise only 1.3% of all educators in the state of Washington and only 7% of educators nationwide.
- Nearly 30% of all students in K-12 schools identify as Hispanic or Latino/a and yet only 9% of all educators identify as Hispanic or Latino/a.
- Asians make up 7% of the US population, but only 2% of all K-12 principals and 2.5% of all K-12 teachers.

Centering our experiences in the classroom and curriculum while simultaneously providing employment as teachers, principals, counselors and administrators is among a number of ways to close the gap between student representation and leadership positions in education.

Ladies of color, we need you! Our students, staff and families need you to be fully rested, ready and prepared to take your rightful place in education as a building or district leader. This session is designed to draw women of color who lead, teach and support students how to navigate a treacherous system not designed for our success through story, wisdom and

actionable steps for immediate implementation. Join us for community, connection and collaboration with women who will lift you up as we climb as leaders.

Speaker



Dr. Monica Haule

Assistant Principal | Everett School District

Co-Speakers



Thomasina Rogers

Past-Chair AWSP Middle Level GLLC | Principal - Central Kitsap MS (Central Kitsap SD)



Dr. Jalene Finley

Principal | Washington Elementary

At the Heart of It All: 40+ Ideas to Build Joy, Trust, and Retention

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 402C

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

1. Welcome & Framing (5 minutes)

Quick connection activity: Participants reflect on one thing their staff *needs more of* right now. The facilitator connects these reflections to national trends in educator morale and retention.

2. 40 Ideas to Inspire (20 minutes)

Rapid-fire presentation of 40 practical ideas—categorized into themes such as:

- Recognition & Celebration
- Wellness & Balance
- Fun & Connection

Participants use a digital or printed “Idea Tracker” to star the ones that resonate.

3. Peer Power: Idea Exchange (15 minutes)

Participants move into small discussion groups to share morale and retention strategies that have worked in their schools. Each group adds their best ideas to a shared collaborative document, creating a living library of resources for all attendees.

4. Commit to Action (5 minutes)

Each leader identifies **three ideas to implement immediately** and **one long-term change** to sustain morale and retention.

5. Closing Reflection & Challenge (5 minutes)

Quick share-out: “One small thing that makes a big difference.” Facilitator encourages participants to keep sharing ideas throughout the conference using a shared QR code or hashtag.

Speaker



Trisha Roach

Principal | Tonasket Middle

Growing, Supporting, and Sustaining Your Building and Central Office Leaders

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 300D

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Worried about supporting and keeping your assistant principals, principals, and central office leaders? Looking for resources to help you engage all of your leaders in ongoing intentional professional growth conversations? Roles and expectations placed on school leaders continue to expand. We must rethink our systems of support. Come engage with leaders from AWSP, WASA, and superintendents from around the state who embarked on an ongoing leadership journey around the School Leader Paradigm and companion resources. Hear their stories and then be first to reserve the same series in your district next year!

Speaker



Scott Seaman

Executive Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Co-Speaker



Jeff Snell

Executive Director | WASA

2026 Legislative Session Update

3:45 PM – 4:35 PM | Location: 300B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

This session provides an overview of the 2026 legislative session and a discussion of budget and policy changes. We'll also discuss the upcoming 2026 elections and look ahead to the 2027-2029 biennium. Come share your district and building stories and needs for the future.

Speaker



Roz Thompson

Director of Government Relations | AWSP

Co-Speakers



Marissa Rathbone

Assistant Executive Director of Government Relations & Advocacy | Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)



Logan Noel-Endres

Director of Strategic Advocacy | WSSDA

WASA President-Elect Candidates' Reception

4:45 PM – 6:00 PM | Location: DoubleTree Spokane Falls Ballroom

2027-28 President-Elect Candidates

Voting starts in August



James Everett

**Incoming Superintendent
Anacortes School District**



Heather Tow-Yick

**Superintendent
Issaquah School District**

Leaders of Color Social

5:30 PM – 6:30 PM | Location: Grand Hotel - Lilac & Pine

Tuesday, June 30, 2026

Seen, Supported, and Sustained: Caring for the Adults Who Care for Students

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 402A

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

In educational settings, the emotional labor of educators is often rendered invisible, even as it sustains the daily work of teaching and learning. This session positions care for adults as a core leadership responsibility and an equity imperative. Aligned with the AWSP Leadership Framework, participants will examine how student- and human-centered leadership practices that prioritize staff well-being directly influence school culture, retention, and student success. Drawing on Muhammad Khalifa's scholarship on culturally responsive leadership and community trust, this session explores how relational, trauma-informed leadership supports educators, particularly in contexts serving historically marginalized communities. Participants will engage in reflective dialogue and applied examples to examine leadership moves that honor educator voice, foster psychological safety, and balance compassion with clarity and accountability. Leaders will leave with practical strategies for embedding relational care into leadership systems—not as isolated wellness initiatives, but as sustainable practices that ensure adults feel seen, supported, and sustained.

Speaker



Sumeyye Cardakli

Associate Principal | Lake Washington School District

Approaches to Empowering Students at the District Level

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 303A

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

School and district leaders should join this session to learn how they can empower and engage students at the district level. This session will draw on research and highlight strategic and impactful ways to maximize and increase student voice in your schools and communities utilizing AWSL's proven strategies and approaches, empowerment, and voice! We will also explore what districts can do to effectively prepare and empower student board representatives to provide input and insight within board meetings and on board actions. Finally, we will consider, from the perspective of a state agency, how inclusion of student voice and perspective has strengthened our advocacy efforts, resources and events.

Speaker



Heather Curl

Director of Leadership Development | WSSDA

Co-Speakers



Logan Noel-Endres

Director of Strategic Advocacy | WSSDA



James Layman

AWSL Director | Association of Washington Student Leaders

Lessons Learned From the First Year as a Lead Principal

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 303B

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

Step into an honest conversation about first-year principalship realities with Heidi Fagerness and Nick Davies, who transformed their rookie year challenges into powerful support networks. After meeting monthly with 30 fellow first-year principals, they've compiled the most pressing problems of practice and breakthrough solutions that actually work in real schools.

This isn't your typical "here's what research says" session—it's a candid discussion between principals who've walked in your shoes. Through interactive protocols and small group problem-solving, you'll tackle messy situations textbooks don't prepare you for: managing veteran staff resistance, navigating district politics, handling crisis communications, and maintaining sanity while learning to lead.

Participants engage in structured peer consultation, share leadership dilemmas, and leave with immediately actionable strategies tested by first-year principals. Whether preparing for your first principalship or supporting new administrators, gain practical wisdom from leaders who understand that best learning happens when we're honest about struggles and generous with solutions.

Speaker



Nick Davies

Principal | Woodland Middle

Co-Speaker



Heidi Fagerness

Chehalis Middle/ AWSP GLLC Middle Level Chair

Parent Whispering- How to diffuse and build connections with the angriest of families

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 402B

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

One of the most difficult day-to-day stressors for administrators is dealing with angry families, but when we lead with the heart and look at our families as partners, we can shift this dynamic. This session will teach a step-by-step, detailed protocol and process for diffusing high emotions, building connections and partnerships and understanding why families become triggered in the first place. Led by an administrator who learned these lessons the hard way—through trial and error, the session also provides Professional Development materials for how teachers can communicate more effectively with families so that administrators don't get the angry phone calls in the first place!

Speakers



Kristina Duncan

Principal | Pioneer Middle



Lisa Franklin

Assistant Principal | Pioneer Middle School, Walla Walla Public Schools

When Systems Align: Leading Coherent Student Support Across Your School

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 302B

PURPOSE-DRIVEN SYSTEMS AND STRATEGY

School leaders are tasked with implementing multiple frameworks—PBIS, MTSS, trauma-informed care, restorative practices, and de-escalation—often simultaneously and with limited time or capacity. While each has value, schools frequently experience “initiative overload,” resulting in fragmented training, disconnected tools, and inconsistent adult practices that ultimately shape student experience.

This session explores how leaders can move from fragmented implementation to coherent systems design by aligning multiple frameworks within a single, integrated platform: Supported School. Drawing on examples from schools across Washington, participants will examine how an aligned system can support consistent adult practice, strengthen data-informed decision-making, and embed professional learning into daily work rather than treating it as an add-on.

Participants will leave with practical strategies for designing structures that unify PBIS, MTSS, trauma-informed, and restorative practices; using data as a tool for reflection and growth; and building sustainable culture change that supports both students and staff.

Why This Session Matters

This session centers on **leadership decision-making**, **systems coherence**, and **sustainable implementation**—core priorities for school and district leaders.

Speaker



Tricia Kannberg, Ed.D.

Professional Learning Consultant | Supported School

Co-Speakers



Corey Turner

President | Supported School



Mark Lund

Professional Learning Consultant | Supported School

Getting That Next Administrative Job You Really Want: How Leaders Position Themselves for the Next Role

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 302A

LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND REFLECTION

Advancing to the next level of district leadership—whether principal, central office administrator, or superintendent—requires far more than simply submitting an application. This session provides a clear, pragmatic roadmap for navigating the complex and competitive hiring landscape. Participants will engage in guided self-reflection to clarify personal and professional goals, assess readiness, and identify both strengths and limitations. We will examine the critical questions every leader should ask when considering a new role, from understanding positional expectations and organizational structures to evaluating district culture, board dynamics, stability, and community context.

The session also demystifies the search process itself, including recruitment timelines, the role of consultants and hiring entities, screening and interview structures, reference checks, and what truly differentiates top candidates. Practical strategies will be shared to strengthen résumés, enhance digital presence, secure meaningful recommendations, use statewide career resources, and prepare for finalist-level engagement.

Participants will leave with a personalized framework and actionable steps to develop or refine a career advancement plan that is intentional, informed, and aligned with long-term professional aspirations.

Speaker



Joel Aune

Owner-Chief Operating Officer | Northwest Leadership Associates

Co-Speaker



Tom Rockefeller

Owner/COO | WASA Other members

AI-Powered PLCs: Turning Evidence into Personalized Action

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 300D

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

This session explores the future of AI-powered PLCs—designed to eliminate the analysis bottleneck that consumes collaborative time and too often limits instructional action.

Dr. Paul J. Bloomberg, founder of The Core Collaborative, will introduce the AI-PLC Agent™, currently being beta-tested across districts nationwide. The model reimagines PLC inquiry by using AI to analyze multiple sources of evidence simultaneously—including student work and self-assessment—producing actionable outputs in minutes. These include student-specific glows and grows, strengths and misconceptions, MLL and UDL scaffolds, and evidence-anchored, instructional next steps using the explicit instruction model.

Orting School District is the only district nationally currently implementing this joint-work under the leadership of Dr. Aaron Lee, Executive Director of Teaching and Learning. Dr. Lee will demonstrate how Orting's teams are using AI-generated outputs to:

- synthesize student work, self-assessment, and student voice
- surface strengths, misconceptions, and progress toward success criteria
- generate clear instructional next steps and personalization pathways
- reclaim PLC time for feedback, small-group design, and responsive teaching

Participants will observe a live demonstration, analyze a real district case study, and leave with leadership strategies for responsibly adopting AI in PLCs—so collaborative inquiry consistently leads to clarity, action, and student agency.

Speaker



Aaron Lee

Executive Director for Teaching, Learning, and Assessment | Orting School District

Co-Speaker



Paul Bloomberg

Founder and CEO Core Collaborative | The Core Collaborative

The Brain Behind the Habit: Designing Change That Matters

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 300A

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

This session explores how small, intentional shifts—just 1% changes—can serve as powerful catalysts for systemwide progress when grounded in neuroscience and habit formation research. Drawing from the principles outlined in *Atomic Habits* and aligned with current findings in cognitive neuroscience, participants will examine how change truly happens in human systems: not through sweeping initiatives alone, but through repeated, well-designed behaviors that compound over time.

Leaders will learn how habits form at the individual and collective level, how identity and environment drive behavior more

than motivation, and why systems often revert to old patterns despite good intentions. Through a neuroscience lens, participants will explore how attention, cognitive load, and emotional safety influence whether new practices stick or stall.

Rather than adding “one more initiative,” this session invites leaders to rethink how existing priorities are implemented. Participants will engage in reflective dialogue, analyze real leadership scenarios, and apply a practical framework for identifying high-leverage 1% shifts that align with their system’s goals. The focus is on designing conditions that make the *right work* easier, more visible, and more sustainable. organizational coherence.

Speaker



Sophia Monge

Assistant Director of Elementary Teaching and Learning | Bethel School District

Co-Speaker



Kelley Boynton

Bethel

The Truth About SchoolLinks: The Path Forward, The Reason Why and How to Rise to the Opportunity We've Been Given

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 300B

LEADERSHIP FOR CHANGE, INNOVATION, AND RESILIENCE

This session invites participants to engage in examining and learning how to rise above the tension between the legislature’s aspirational vision and districts’ on-the-ground realities for implementing the new universal online HSBP platform, SchoolLinks. Using a structured self-assessment protocol grounded in state, district, and school-level HSBP “Pulse Check” data, participants will reflect on current practices and conditions, and explore successful strategies with administrators at various stages of the implementation process.

Both facilitators and practitioners will engage participants in exploring key insights, lessons learned, and practical advice for implementation, from meeting minimum requirements to maximizing the use of SchoolLinks for data-driven decision making, allocating resources, meeting district and building goals and planning for the future. Participants will leave with ready-to-use resources designed to support the planning and implementation of SchoolLinks in their own contexts.

Participants should bring a laptop and have access to the SchoolLinks platform, and can expect to walk away with actionable and successfully utilized resources to support their own implementation.

Speaker



Kim Reykdal

Director, Graduation and Pathway Preparation | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)

Co-Speakers



Kelsey Parke

Director, Career and Technical Education | Peninsula School District



Ashley Stolhand

Assistant Director, Career and Technical Education | Peninsula School District



Abby Anaya Bedell

High School and Beyond Plan Program Supervisor | Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction · Full-time

FutureReady: Innovating Graduation Requirements to Empower Tomorrow's Leaders

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 401A

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

FutureReady is an initiative aimed at updating Washington State high school graduation requirements to better prepare students for the future. The goal is to empower students with the essential knowledge and skills they need to thrive in a changing world, while streamlining the graduation requirements framework to promote accessibility and equity.

The initiative will culminate in a legislative proposal anticipated for the 2027 session. This session will outline key findings and **recommendations** from the Board and the FutureReady Task Force.

Historically, state education policy has been developed in silos, often without sufficient input from the very communities it impacts most directly—students and families, particularly those from underserved groups. This traditional approach has led to policies that do not fully reflect the needs and experiences of all stakeholders, especially those furthest from educational justice.

FutureReady was built to take a different, more collaborative approach.

To ensure that Washington’s diverse educational communities are represented, the Board convened the FutureReady Task Force in early 2025. Members include students and families, community-based organizations, K-12 education, post-secondary education, employers, and policymakers. The Task Force also includes compensated community liaisons who gather insights directly from the communities they represent. This ensures student and family perspectives remain central to the process.

Speaker



Randy Spaulding

Executive Director | Washington State Board of Education

Co-Speaker



Alissa Muller

Policy Director | Washington State Board of Education

Better Together: A Q&A with Washington's Leadership Associations

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 300C

COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP: BETTER TOGETHER IN ACTION

This session will be designed as an interactive, two-way Q&A featuring the executive directors of the Washington Association of School Administrators and the Association of Washington School Principals. Aligned with the 2026 conference theme, *Better Together: Leading with Purpose. Connecting with Heart*, the dialogue will engage participants in a collaborative conversation grounded in the conference strands: Collaborative Leadership; Purpose-Driven Systems and Strategy; The Human Side of Leadership; Leadership for Change, Innovation, and Resilience; and Leadership Growth and Reflection. Drawing from the questions and experiences we hear most often from school leaders, the discussion will explore these strands through examples related to leadership pathways, celebrating success, supporting leaders through challenging times, and the evaluation and growth process. Participant voice and feedback will be central to the session and intentionally gathered to inform future association planning and strengthen how we collectively support leaders throughout their leadership journey.

Speakers



Jeff Snell

Executive Director | WASA



Scott Seaman

Executive Director | Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

Lifting as We Lead: Empowering Latino Educators Through Mentorship, Growth, and Development

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 401C

LEADERSHIP GROWTH AND REFLECTION

Latino educators remain underrepresented in formal leadership roles despite their growing presence in schools and districts across Washington State. This session centers on the importance of intentionally empowering Latino educators, both current and aspiring, into leadership through mentorship, networking, and professional development, while also attending to the *inner work* that sustains leaders over time.

Grounded in the *Leadership Growth and Reflection* track, this interactive session invites participants to explore how identity, purpose, and reflection shape leadership practice. Drawing from lived leadership experience and the collective work of WALAS (Washington Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents), the session highlights strategies that support leadership sustainability, resilience, and belonging—particularly for leaders navigating systems where they may be one of few.

Participants will engage in guided reflection, dialogue, and practical exercises focused on:

- Mentorship as both support and leadership development
- Networking as a strategy for growth and access
- Reflection as a tool for wellness, clarity, and sustainability
- Purpose-driven leadership that honors identity and lived experience

Attendees will leave with useful tools, ideas, and reflective practices they can apply personally and organizationally to strengthen leadership pipelines, foster inclusive systems, and support the next generation

of Latino educational leaders.

Speaker



Ismael Vivanco

Superintendent | Northwest Educational Service District 189

Co-Speakers



Sergio Hernandez

Director | Washington Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents (WALAS)



Dr. Susana Reyes

Superintendent | Shoreline SD

From Improvement to Impact: One Elementary School's Path To Strengthening Collective Efficacy through Human-Centered Leadership

8:30 AM – 9:20 AM | Location: 402C

THE HUMAN SIDE OF LEADERSHIP: CONNECTING WITH HEART

How does a school transition from state-identified improvement status to exiting that status in just one year? At Hathaway Elementary, the answer lies in The Human Side of Leadership—a people-centered approach that prioritizes belonging and authentic engagement. This session explores how the principal and school counselor partnered to empower staff, fostering a resilient culture of educators who truly believe in their collective impact on student success. A cornerstone of this transformation was the formation of a Guiding Coalition. This leadership team served as the "engine" of change, ensuring that school-wide goals remained focused and that every staff member felt represented in the decision-making process. We shifted from a top-down management style to a collaborative model that prioritized staff morale and retention. Furthermore, we moved away from teaching in isolation. By aligning Tier 1 core instruction across the building, we ensured that students in Special Education and Multilingual programs received high-quality, inclusive support within the general education setting. Participants will learn how Hathaway integrated emotional intelligence and trauma-informed leadership to strengthen connections between staff and students. These strategies didn't just improve the feel of the building; they led to tangible results. Join us to discover how leading with heart, empathy, and a strong guiding coalition can transform school culture and drive rapid, sustainable improvement.

Speaker



Wendy Morrill

Principal | Washougal School District

Co-Speaker



Alysia Noriega-Linde

Elementary School Counselor | Hathaway Elementary

Closing Brunch with Sandy Zimmerman, and Prize Drawings

9:20 AM – 11:15 AM | Location: CC Exhibit Hall C

Closing Brunch with Sandy Zimmerman, and Prize Drawings

GRAND PRIZE: Two tickets to the SOLD OUT Benson Boone concert at the Numerica Veterans Arena in Spokane on August 2, plus an overnight stay at the DoubleTree and a \$100 gift card for Davenport Restaurants. Must be present during the Tuesday closing brunch to win!

Speaker



Sandy Zimmerman

Inspirational Speaker, Coach, and Author

Sandy Zimmerman

11:15 AM – 12:00 PM | Location: CC Exhibit Hall C

Speaker



Sandy Zimmerman

Inspirational Speaker, Coach, and Author

WASA UW Education Funding Workgroup

1:00 PM – 4:00 PM | Location: GH Meeting Room 5