



WSSDA

direct

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SUMMER 2020



Dancing to a different beat

Eatonville Middle School PE teacher, Mr. Erik Danielson, hosting a socially distant neighborhood dance party.

WSSDA responds to COVID-19, [p.7](#); High-impact advocacy: students join us on “the Hill,” [p.8](#); Spotlight on the Nominating Committee, [p.5](#); Best of the best: OSPI’s annual student art show, [p.6](#); Clover Park board chair on “the right kind of effort,” [p.10](#); Inequitable by design, [p.14](#) **And more! >>**



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November 18–21 Spokane, WA



WSSDA 2020 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

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CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

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Use *Direct* to share your learning with peers.

DIRECTOR TO DIRECTOR

We're looking to spotlight WSSDA members who'd like to share their insights as veteran board members, newcomers or as exemplars of small, medium or large districts. If that's you, let us know!

PASSION PIECES

Is there a subject you feel strongly about that you'd like to raise with fellow school directors? Then submit a "passion piece" in which you share why the issue is important to you, what you've learned that others may not know, and explain how this issue has informed your work as a school director.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

If your district has experienced success (or failure) that would be instructive to others, let us know so we can help you tell the story!

REVIEWED BY PEERS

Is there a book, a training or professional development event, software or even an app that has benefited you? Write a review about it.

For submissions, questions or comments, contact Sean Duke, Communications Officer, at s.duke@wssda.org. **To advertise in *Direct*,** contact Josh Collette at j.collette@wssda.org.

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From the Executive Director

The strength within

In this unique time, we see the strength of those around us every day. We see people making a difference and doing what matters regardless of circumstance.

In this issue of *Direct*, we commemorate some of those wonderful people and their actions.

Among those doing their best to enrich their schools is the **Clover Park School District**. In the reflection on page 10, school board president, Dr. Marty Schafer, discusses how the Boards of Distinction application helps them refocus on their goals and vision each year.

On page five, we borrow from WSSDA's annual report to review **five highlights from 2019** and discuss what they meant for our members and the organization. And though our mission remains the same, WSSDA has adjusted some of the ways we serve our members. On page 7, we outline the actions we have taken to tailor our **work in the time of COVID-19**.

Accompanying the changes in our work, WSSDA is also relaunching our workspace. The work of WSSDA has always focused on our members, and now we have a building to mirror that. With an **expanded meeting space** dedicated to hosting school directors and educational partners, the new WSSDA headquarters will bring more K-12 conversations to WSSDA (once we're through with social distancing).

Finally, in "Adapting to Change" on page 12, you can see a **photo gallery of our districts** and their communities reimagining what it looks like to work together and support one another.

These are odd times that we never imagined ourselves witnessing. But in these times we realize the **strength within ourselves and our communities**. We have and continue to prove to our students, schools, and districts that we are here for them, and we can conquer anything. Thank you for all that you have done and continue to do. Please enjoy this issue of *Direct*.

Tim Garchow

Tim Garchow, WSSDA Executive Director



Photo above: **Words of encouragement from Idlewild Elementary School of Clover Park School District**



Instances of hope, resilience, hard work and creativity from our school districts, **p.12**

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WSSDA direct

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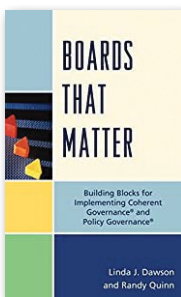
HIGHLIGHTS



OSPI's 47th HIGH SCHOOL ART SHOW, **p.6**



CLOVER PARK, **p.10**



BOOK REVIEW:
Former WSSDA president, Chris Nation, reviews *Boards That Matter* by Linda J. Dawson and Randy Quinn, **p.14**

>> CORRECTION: In "The Making of a Movement" (Spring 2020), Riverside school board chair Brandi Maynard's first name was incorrectly spelled as Randi. Our apologies to Director Maynard.

Leadership Development –Tricia Lubach

Brené Brown notes that **“the dark does not destroy the light; it defines it.”** It’s our fear of the dark that casts our joy into the shadows.” There is fear and uncertainty right now about lives lost, great hardships, and tremendous disruption of everyday life. It’s hard to ignore the darkness of fear. Yet the light is all around us too. Every day people are heroes as they care for the sick, supply us with food, and provide vital services. In school districts, heroes abound. Food service staff prepares essential meals that bus drivers deliver to children. Janitors protect lives by cleaning buildings and buses. Teachers overcome their fears to try new ways of teaching. Administrators strive for a tenuous balance of stability and flexibility. This is the light all around us. School directors can also be lights in their community. Einstein said, “adversity introduces a man to himself.” Find the light in yourself during this time of adversity. Be the leader your community needs by offering hope, truth, courage, and compassion.

Government Relations –Marissa Rathbone

In *The Summer Day*, Mary Oliver writes, **“Tell me, what is it you plan to do with your one wild and precious life?”** I have revisited this quote/question often throughout my life and especially during times of change. Our public education system, and the individuals that work so hard to support it, are in a transition like we have never known before. Many people are experiencing hardships and prepare for future obstacles as the revenue forecasts give way to budget cuts. At the same time, we have seen creative and adaptable approaches to meet the needs of our students, families, communities, state, and nation. Many of these successes will continue to be demonstrated in the collaboration and can-do approach between school staff, community members, and policy-makers. And despite recent change, one constant remains: your government relations team continues to advocate in support of you and your districts. With this wild and precious life, we will serve, support, and advocate – for you and with you.

Policy and Legal –Abigail Westbrook

The last few months have seen all of us doing our best to navigate uncharted waters. I hope the efforts of our Policy and Legal branch have provided boards with timely and substantial support these last couple of months. By now, the latest issue of *Policy and Legal News* should have been released. In that issue, you’ll find a rich discussion of current issues as they impact the work of school boards. With adjustments to OPMA, PRA, graduation requirements, and grading frameworks, it feels as though the ground beneath us has been constantly shifting. While life as we know it may continue to change, our commitment to school directors does not. We’re focused on helping boards observe the law, respond to change, and ultimately benefit students.

From the Board President



When you installed me last November, I could not have imagined the circumstances under which I would be writing this message. For a person who is used to hugging everyone, including perfect strangers, it is going to be very difficult to get used to the elbow bump. I hope you all help me.

Seriously, we are in a place never imagined. We have set aside the plans that we have worked on for years to concentrate on this emergency. At the same time we worry about the physical, emotional and economic health of our family, friends and community, and grieve for those who have been most injured by the novel coronavirus.

I know all of you have complex circumstances, both in your board work and in your “day jobs.” Many of you are first responders, dealing with the medical situation daily. Like our administrative staff and our educators, many of you are working from home, trying to balance jobs, children and technology. In doing those jobs and your board work, you are dealing with an unprecedented influx of information in all formats. It is an enormous challenge.

Our WSSDA staff has been magnificent, I believe, in rising to their challenge. Just a few minutes on the website will leave you amazed at the amount of work they have accomplished and their success in bringing your voice to the decision making tables in our state, while they deal with all the same obstacles. Please take advantage of all WSSDA has to offer you, such as model policies, networking, and curated guidance.

Above all, be kind to yourselves. Take a minute to laugh if you can. My laugh came when I gave my husband a haircut using his thinnest garden shears. I pray he doesn’t get the opportunity to return the favor. Self-care is vitally important, and as leaders of your community, it can only help for you to model that. Please take excellent care of yourselves. Your families, your schools, your communities and your WSSDA cannot do without you. I cannot do without you, and I am forever proud of all that you accomplish.

Brenda Rogers, WSSDA Board President

Reflect. Reimagine. Relaunch.



November 18–21 Spokane, WA

Two ways to play

ANNUAL CONFERENCE ADOPTS EXPANDED FORMAT

Faced with the profound challenges of 2020, we've all been forced to rethink how we do things. Annual Conference, for example, is moving to a hybrid format with both in-person and virtual attendance. Coping with adversity has shown us tremendous examples of resilience, strength, hope and ingenuity. Never has there been a better opportunity for education leaders to reflect on what we've learned, reimagine new ways to educate and connect, and relaunch with invigorated energy and inspiration. School building closures have led education leaders to reimagine new ways to deliver education, meals and support to students. Proving again that necessity is the mother of invention, schools have rapidly moved from the schoolhouse model to a virtual space, from classrooms to virtual connections. We've pushed our boundaries to envision innovative solutions and reimagine new ways to commit to the things that are still important to us—high-quality instruction, equitable access for each and every student, and supporting the success of children in all aspects of their lives. School directors and other education leaders are exploring ways to rethink how we meet, work, collaborate and lead. Join us as we reimagine how to take the best of K-12 public education and make it even better.

DID YOU KNOW? Registration for Annual Conference opens June 3. Visit wssda.org/AC to save your place and secure lodging. Don't miss this opportunity to learn, share, connect and be inspired with both in-person and virtual attendance.

Same place, new space

WSSDA HQ IS TAKING SHAPE

Construction continues on WSSDA's new headquarters. Due to COVID-19, delivery of windows and roofing material were behind schedule, but everything that could be done absent a roof has proceeded without issue. Waiting for roofing materials will only slightly delay completion, which is still planned for late 2020. Adapting to current events, the skilled workers are following current health and safety guidelines. To access the work site, steps include wearing latex gloves, a face mask, checking for fever and responding to a six-question health survey. The Department of Enterprise Services, which is managing the overall project, along with builder Christensen Inc. and MSG Architects, have done a fantastic job of keeping the project on track and on budget.





COMMITTEE CORNER

Nominating Committee



Committee Chair
Cindy Kelly
Port Angeles

The Nominating Committee is one of WSSDA's four standing committees, which include the Legislative, Resolutions and Interscholastic Activities committees. The group's membership includes one school director from each of WSSDA's 11 director areas (DAs), except DA 2, which

has two representatives due to the size of its student population.

The primary role of the Nominating Committee is to identify, encourage and recommend highly qualified WSSDA members to step into leadership positions. For example, the committee solicits candidates for WSSDA board officer positions and recommends any outstanding candidates to membership. Nominating Committee members also facilitate DA election meetings where each region selects its representative to sit on the WSSDA board and the four standing committees.

The current chair of the Nominating Committee is Cindy Kelly of Port Angeles School District. Cindy has been a school director for 19 years, a WSSDA committee member for 18 years and a former WSSDA board member. Cindy is also WSSDA's tribal ambassador and chairing WSSDA's Government-to-Government Task force.

"An organization is only as good as its members," said Kelly. "That's why I think the Nominating Committee is important. We try to find and encourage knowledgeable, experienced, and dedicated school directors to step forward and help lead WSSDA toward reaching our goals and fulfilling WSSDA's mission."

Kelly went on to say she was grateful for the hard work of her fellow committee members. Their voices represent school districts from large to small and rural to urban. She also encourages others to consider seeking a seat on a committee.

"It's better to be at the table than on the menu," said Kelly. "Making sure we have great people in leadership positions or doing committee work will help WSSDA realize its full potential as an influential group of 1,477 elected officials."

Learn more about WSSDA committees and other bodies at wssda.org/groups

How 1 + 1 = 1

Boosting efficiency and engagement with General Assembly

For the first time, WSSDA will hold a general assembly in September. The WSSDA General Assembly is where school directors will affirm what WSSDA values and decide what WSSDA advocates for in the Legislature. Any proposed additions or changes to WSSDA's bylaws would also be voted on. This new annual event will combine two separate assemblies for determining WSSDA's permanent and legislative positions into a single event.

All school directors are encouraged to participate. The more districts that participate, the more weight WSSDA's positions will carry in the Legislature and the nation's capital. Having only one event will reduce the need for school board members to mark out days on their already-full calendars and lessen the need to travel.

Holding a general assembly was approved by a vote of WSSDA members during an assembly at the 2019 WSSDA Annual Conference. Going forward, there won't be an assembly at annual conference, which will free up time for additional breakout sessions.

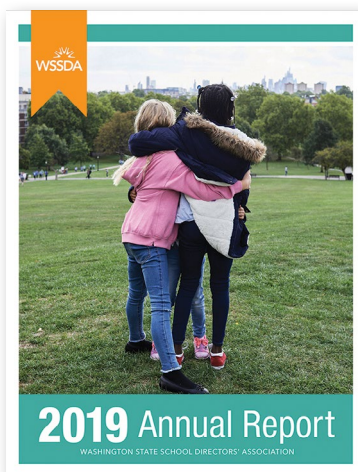
Don't miss this opportunity to represent the concerns and aspirations of your school district. Connecting with peers and adding your board's voice to the dialog will strengthen the whole of WSSDA's "why" of promoting public education. We urge you to attend and engage.

ANNUAL REPORT:

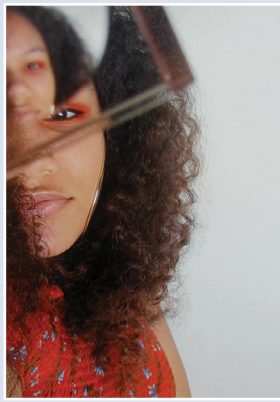
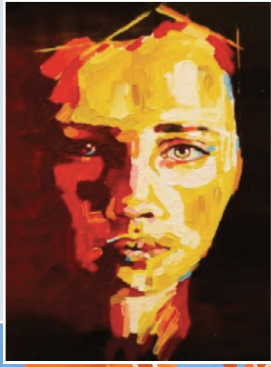
Top 5 from 2019

1. A stronger foundation with equity

In February of 2019, the WSSDA board created an [equity statement](#) to guide the work of WSSDA and inspire the educational community to follow suit. As then WSSDA Board President Aurora Flores said, "Making a statement on equity was not a spur of the moment decision. The entire board spent months looking inwardly together. Sometimes we had disagreements, but we talked through those with patience and respect for each other. The effort was time well-spent because we were ultimately unanimous in choosing the statement's wording." And, at the 2019 WSSDA Delegate Assembly, school directors voted to adopt the equity statement as a permanent position for WSSDA.



TOP 5, CONTINUED ON PAGE 6

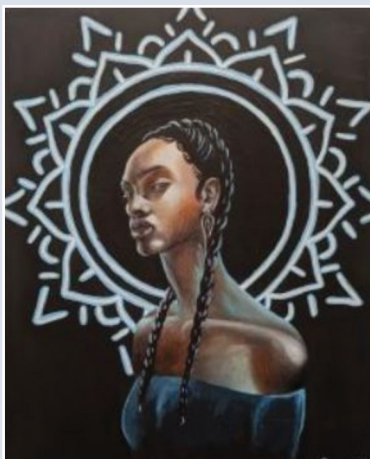


When springtime rolls around, trees and flowers aren't the only things blooming.

Each year, OSPI and the Washington Art Education Association co-host one of the most exciting events in public education. High school students across the state showcase their artistic skills through paintings, photographs, hand-made creations and other eye-catching visuals. Students also share the story behind the creativity that led to their work, inspiring spectators around the state.

Despite the challenges of the pandemic, students and art teachers in Washington have worked together to make this year's art show possible by hosting it virtually. Be sure to check it out. The incredible talent on display is as moving as spring itself.

Clockwise from top left: FIERY WOMAN, Acrylic paint; IN A DAZE, digital photography; THE STREAM, digital art; NEON, acrylic paint on gesso board; MOUNTAIN IN ASL, digital media. [View all artwork at OSPI 2020 Art Show.](#)



OSPI 2020 High School ART SHOW

2. A more transparent and fair dues formula

At November's WSSDA Delegate Assembly, school directors overwhelmingly voted to approve a reconfiguration of WSSDA's formula for calculating annual dues. The new formula replaced an outdated system with a transparent and more equitable formula tied to state funding for certificated employees. Aligned with the state's current funding model, the formula eliminated "outliers" that either paid too much or too little. Also, the revised formula provided an immediate reduction of dues for more than half of all school districts.

3. A first-of-its-kind training system

No other school board association in America has a professional learning system quite like ours. Called [OnBoard](#), WSSDA rolled out its new teaching and learning system to a broad audience for the first time at the 2019 Annual Conference. Highly praised by participants, attendance at the OnBoard pre-conference workshops contributed to the annual conference's near doubling of the pre-conference attendance record. Learn more about OnBoard at [wssda.org/onboard](#).

4. A new WSSDA headquarters

Fall was a busy time at WSSDA! Besides launching OnBoard and preparing for the annual conference, construction began in October. Years of research and reflection by multiple WSSDA boards, combined with shrewd fiscal management, allowed WSSDA to begin the project without using any association dues to fund it. The new building will provide increased meeting space, reduced costs, and improved collaboration with educational partners and other organizations.

5. A change in leadership

Due to a retirement and a career advancement, the government relations and leadership development branches of WSSDA both saw new directors take the reins. First, Tricia Lubach began steering the leadership development branch. Tricia had been WSSDA's primary training specialist since 2014 and brought over a decade of experience serving on the Quincy School District board. In government relations, WSSDA lost an OSPI alumna only to gain another in Marissa Rathbone. Marissa brought fifteen years of experience ranging from classroom teaching to state education leadership positions.

See the full report at [wssda.org/annualreport](#).

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WSSDA responds to COVID-19

When governor Inslee announced the closure of all Washington school districts in mid-March, WSSDA staff knew there would be a significant shift in their focus.

Thoughts quickly turned from “How do we serve our members?” to “How do we support district leaders and their communities during an unprecedented crisis?” Within 24 hours, the first answer to that question was the COVID-19 networking calls.

Initially four times a week, the calls have been a valuable forum for board members to share their challenges and solutions with each other while equipping WSSDA staff with insights to carry into discussions with legislators and other state leaders.

A second response took the form of extremely rapid model policy and resolution writing. While COVID-19 had some citizens ordering groceries through services like Instacart, school directors were receiving “insta-policy” from WSSDA’s director of Policy and Legal Services, Abigail Westbrook. Within a day or two of proclamations by the governor or guidance

from OSPI, the Policy and Legal branch produced critical resources in the form of a time-saving board resolution and an essential “graduation toolkit” with several new and revised model policies.

Special thanks also goes out to educational partners and legislators who have listened and shared during the COVID-19 networking calls. Thanks to the graciousness of these partners and the collegiality of their relationships, our collective response could not have been as swift or coordinated.

But the most impressive work of all has occurred within our amazing school districts. “This has been a true test of your patience and leadership,” says WSSDA Executive Director, Tim Garchow. “We are so proud of the 1,477 school directors in the state, and it is an honor to serve you.”

UPDATES



During this year's annual WASA/WSSDA/WASBO Day on the Hill, I facilitated a student representative advocacy activity with Erin Jones, a K-12 Schools and Systems Consultant. This opportunity engaged students in learning about hot topics and creating advocacy statements to share with legislators and their communities. Reflecting on her experience, Jones said, "Who better to inform us of system needs than the students being served by the system?" Topics that were discussed included (1) the need to update the prototypical school funding model and (2) student and school safety. One advocacy statement pointed out, "The prototypical school model is outdated and does not reflect the diversity in need among districts. Therefore, districts are forced to make the decision between breaking the state law or not providing for students."

I asked the four students that testified this session to reflect on their experience. Here's what they said:

As a student representative for Eatonville School District, I had the opportunity to attend WSSDA Day on the Hill. As a student, I had the chance to meet with many different Legislators and use my student voice to advocate for educational legislation. The opportunity to represent all students was a great honor, and I appreciate the wonderful experience it gave me.

—Andrea Litzenberger, Eatonville

Being able to attend the 2020 WSSDA Legislative Conference and Day on the Hill and testify in support of House Bill 2589 has been a tremendous experience for both Sierra and me as Student Representatives. Following the tragic suicides that our community experienced in the past year, it felt inspiring to have our student voice heard and see real changes being made with the addition of national suicide prevention hotlines to student and staff ID cards. It is crucial for state legislators to listen and stay current with the most pressing issues facing students today. By presenting our student experience to those we saw during

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Student Voice on the Hill

—Logan Endres, Government Relations Coordinator

Student voice is integral on local school boards and within WSSDA. Throughout the 2020 legislative session, the Government Relations team worked hard to provide fulfilling opportunities for student representatives to engage in advocacy efforts. We plan to continue these efforts throughout the interim and beyond.

Multiple groups of student representatives made the trip to Olympia and testified on various bills. Despite an early morning and freezing temperatures, Emily Frey and Andrea Litzenberger testified on the comprehensive sexual health education bill, SB 5395. Cedric Nagata and Sierra Owens testified on the suicide prevention/ID cards bill, HB 2589. Representative Lisa Callan, the prime sponsor of the suicide prevention/ID cards bill, returned to the hearing room to watch the students testify and celebrated their contributions by bringing them to the House Chamber floor for photos.

Above, top: Student representatives meeting with Representative Debra Entenmann during WSSDA's Day on the Hill. Above, bottom: Student representatives filling out early voter registration forms in the Secretary of State's office. Right: Logan Endres and Erin Jones facilitating an advocacy activity for student representative during WSSDA's Day on the Hill. Opposite: Logan Endres teaching student representatives about WSSDA's advocacy strategies during the 2020 legislative session.

“Following the tragic suicides that our community experienced in the past year, it felt inspiring to have our student voice heard and see real changes being made with the addition of national suicide prevention hotlines to student and staff ID cards. –*Cedric Nagata*”



the Day on the Hill, we ensured those legislators knew the importance of student mental health and safety.

–*Cedric Nagata, Riverview*

Through Day On The Hill, I was able to take part in our democracy by advocating for not only various school districts, but my fellow students. This day has shown me that every voice matters, and our legislators are always willing to hear them as they represent us when making and passing legislation. I urge other youth to take part in the democratic process in their communities and strive to make change. –*Emily Frey, Eatonville*

Being given such amazing opportunities to attend the 2020 WSSDA Legislative Conference and Day on the Hill and to testify in support of House Bill 2589 have been the absolute best experiences. All these opportunities gave each student such a unique experience that gave us the spotlight to be heard and seen where all the change can happen. After facing tragic experiences in a small community, being able to help testify in support of bills addressing ways to help these issues, shows the many ways we are able to aid future crisis in all communities around us. –*Sierra Owens, Riverview*

WSSDA's Government Relations team continues to expand opportunities for student voice and representation. As a next step, we will convene a workgroup for student representatives on suicide prevention awareness to support the implementation of House Bill 2589. "Students can only imagine what they've seen before, and that's why it's so important for them to be in decision-making spaces," says Erin Jones.

To be added to our list of student representatives, please e-mail l.endres@wssda.org.

Education in the 21st Century!

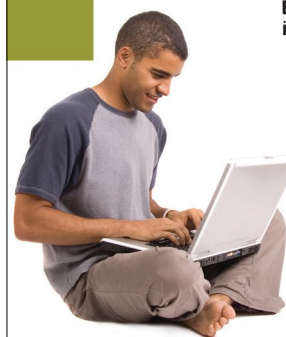
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GOOD OF THE ORDER

NSBA gains a WSSDA past president

Marnie Maraldo of Issaquah School District has been elected to the board of the National School Boards Association (NSBA). One of three school directors representing the pacific region, Director Maraldo's presence will allow WSSDA to have a voice in directing the development of NSBA and its priorities, including federal advocacy.

"NSBA is in a time of transition, so I appreciate being part of what this next generation of the organization will look like," said Maraldo. "Since WSSDA took a hard look at itself and came up with WSSDA 2.0, it has better served its members based on having a real understanding of what our members need. I'm hoping to bring that same approach to NSBA so that NSBA can really understand who its customers are and how best to support state associations that, in turn, support school directors and districts."

Per WSSDA bylaws, Director Maraldo will rejoin the WSSDA board as a voting member by virtue of her position on the NSBA board. As a participant in the board's conversations, she will act as a direct conduit between WSSDA and discussions at the national level.

2019 BOARD OF THE YEAR:
board chair explains how looking
back moves them forward

Clover PARK

by Dr. Marty Schafer

The Clover Park School District Board of Directors has always seen ourselves as liaisons between the community and the school district. We are free from believing that we are the educational professionals, that we need to fix the district, or that we expect the superintendent to always make the community leaders happy and decrease our spending every year. We have also shifted our practices to truly keep students at the center of our decision-making. In fact, we keep an old desk in the center of the board room as a visual reminder. While we are elected by the voters of our community, in reality, we represent those who don't even get to vote—our students.

We have taken the role of board director seriously both on an individual level to grow in leadership, and on a team level to grow in a shared vision. It has been rewarding to work at being an effective board to carry the needs of students during a constant climate of change. We know that we must continue to grow in leadership as there certainly is a new normal every year. In an effort to stay relevant and to model a growth mindset, we apply to WSSDA's Boards of Distinction program. The application process serves as a built-in check and balance as to how well we are developing as a board and overseeing the right impacts on student success.

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Left to right: Anthony Veliz, Paul Wagemann, Carole Jacobs, Marty Schafer, Supt. Ron Banner

“ We know that we have to continue to grow in leadership as there certainly is a new normal every year. In an effort to stay relevant and to model a growth mindset, we apply to WSSDA's Boards of Distinction program. ”

We see great value in being held accountable to having superintendent evaluations, doing board self-assessments, overseeing our district improvement plans, and having strategies that focus on the opportunity gap. Basically, just completing the application keeps a board reminded of the right strategies for success. In filling out the application, it reminds me of going through a pilot's checklist prior to takeoff. If we truly want to set the right activities into motion, then we need to be focused on those things that are integral to success.

Our board has found that there is also an accountability factor by filling out the application. The requirements for the application cause us to measure progress and remind us of what is working. This enables us to make sure that we align our resources to those things that bring growth. So often, it feels like the work of a board is just trying to maintain or do damage control; however, the application questions help us see where we can promote growth and leverage momentum. This naturally creates an exciting and collaborative discussion around what went well and what needs to be recalibrated.

This last year, we emphasized building a culture that focuses on student success. Incorporating our "Four Pillars of Success," we aimed to get students engaged by helping them see the value of education and then equipping them to manage their educational plans. This was our way of closing achievement gaps where achievement was more than just grades, but inclusive of qualities like being a life-long learner, skilled at collaboration, having a sound character, and developing leadership traits.

In our diverse district and community, we are set up to value people who are different on many levels. To this end, we have broadened our view of what constitutes success. For example, we've been discussing how character applies to being your best, and how leadership is actually bringing out the best in others. This shift in defining student success is not new. We've been working on this shift for quite some time through collaboration between our board and district staff.

“We see great value in being held accountable to having superintendent evaluations, doing board self-assessments, overseeing our district improvement plans and having strategies that focus on the opportunity gap.”

In conclusion, the Boards of Distinction application does take significant effort, but it is the right kind of effort. Doing the application energizes us as a board by reviewing our data and identifying the positive outcomes of our decision-making. It is not our goal to win Board of the Year. For us, the goal is to be a Board of the Year by doing good work. We can be our best each year, and that is enough (though I would be lying if I did not say that it felt great to be recognized for our hard work as a team). Also, we always want to learn what other districts are doing and how we can bring their insights here to Lakewood to benefit our students. Let me encourage each district to apply for Board of Distinction to help share best practices. In so doing, we all win!



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

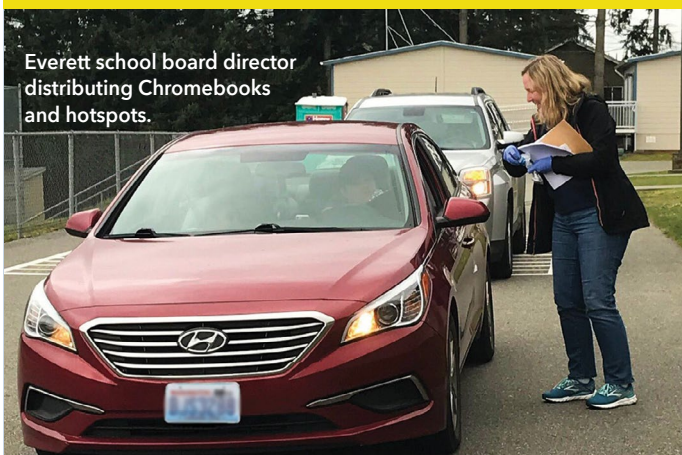
Dr. Marty Schafer is currently serving his seventh term as school board president since first joining the board in April 2005. He is married and has three daughters, two of which graduated from Clover Park schools. He has a bachelor's degree in urban planning from Western Washington University and a doctorate in ministry leadership from Golden Gate Theological Seminary. Schafer volunteers in the schools, mentors student athletes, works with churches in the community and is an instructional consultant and advocate for public education.



Shorewood staff excitedly greeting their graduates for cap and gown pick-up.

Adapting to change

Instances of hope, resilience, hard work and creativity from our school districts



Everett school board director distributing Chromebooks and hotspots.



North Thurston students receiving their free meals.



Hoquiam High School senior banners displayed at the Pocklington Central Play Park.



Idlewild's message to the community.

A still from Deer Park's drone video showing their football field painted with the names of their graduating seniors.



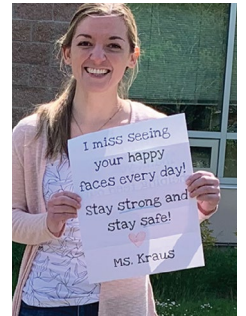
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Eatonville Middle School PE teacher, Mr. Erik Danielson, hosting a neighborhood socially distant dance party.



Chase Lake teachers' messages to students (above and below).



When faced with a challenge, you can crumble under pressure or rise to the occasion. In the last three months, our districts and their communities have decided time and time again to **rise to the occasion**. When schools were closed for the remainder of the year, teachers found **new ways to reach their students**. When prom and sporting events were canceled, our **communities threw parades**. When graduations became virtual, the community made **signs, banners, videos, songs, social media pages**, all in support of our graduates. Your hard work and passion have shown through the COVID-19 haze, and in some beautiful instances, someone was there to capture it. The year 2020 won't only be the year coronavirus upturned our lives. It will also be the year we witnessed **the love and passion our schools, districts, families, and communities have for one another**.



Seattle Public Schools staff and volunteers providing meals to students.



Washougal School District transportation employees get packets ready to deliver.



Shoreline shows support for their seniors.

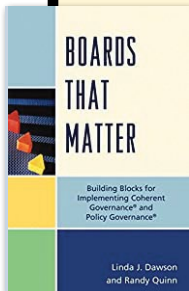


Book Review

Chris Nation reviews *Boards that Matter: Building Blocks for Implementing Coherent Governance and Policy Governance*

As elected representatives for your community, you have the power to communicate the community's expectations, oversee the educational program, and ultimately improve student achievement within your public school system.

The question is, how? The answer: through the development and use of a governance framework model. Luckily, there are several good books with information on how to develop and implement that type of model.



One such book is ***Boards that Matter: Building Blocks for Implementing Coherent Governance and Policy Governance*** by Randy Quinn and Linda J. Dawson.

The book showcases a system of steps and procedures that will help your board get its preferred governance model up and running. The book begins by describing two models in greater detail.

Later, it focuses on "how" the board will work to develop these new governance policies, providing leading questions for you to think about, like: Who will need to be present at the table as advisors? How will the development process work? How will the board reach a consensus on a policy? And much more! Sequential chapters guide you through the development of each policy area with thought-provoking questions to assist you.

Throughout the book, the authors are always thinking about the reader. Knowing many of us are visual learners, when a concept or idea was presented, it is often supported with a visual reference to follow.

The book does not stop at the conclusion of the governance policy development, but continues with chapters on helping to draft a board annual work plan, designing a reporting calendar for monitoring and compliance, and building a communication and dialog plan for key stakeholders.

Whichever direction your district takes towards building a governance framework model, I recommend adding *Boards that Matter: Building Blocks for Implementing Coherent Governance and Policy Governance* to your library.

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Elected to the Marysville School Board in 2009, Chris is a past president and vice president of the WSSDA board. He remains engaged with WSSDA as a member of the Legislative Committee.



EQUITY IN ACTION

Inequitable by design:

The Washington state history we didn't learn in school

by Mary Fertakis

Have you ever questioned why we have some of our current federal, state, county, and municipal laws? Have you ever wondered where some of your school district policies originate? These are the types of questions that school directors often don't have time to dive into, but the answers are essential. Many of the equity issues districts face today have their roots in laws and policies adopted when Washington was still a territory. The hard truth is that many discriminatory policies and practices in education have been created and upheld by superintendents and school boards across the country and here in Washington.

Why does this matter? Even though current school boards didn't create these policies, the ideas, beliefs and values contained in them continue to negatively impact specific groups of students. From studying the historical record, it is clear that the American education system was originally designed to serve white, male, affluent, and able-bodied students. However, the students of today represent a wide variety of demographics. Even so, many of our laws and policies still contain elements that trace back to the eugenics movement, whose racial and ethnic discrimination intentionally excluded many of the demographics present in our public education system. Examining our state's history with an eye toward issues of race and equity reveals the context for what we see happening today.

As a part of its commitment to providing educational equity, WSSDA is conducting an in-depth research project to compile Washington state's history as it relates to matters of race and equity.

"...the students of today represent a wide variety of demographics. Even so, many of our laws and policies still contain elements that trace back to the eugenics movement, whose racial and ethnic discrimination intentionally excluded many of the demographics present in our public education system."

“Have you ever wondered where some of your school district policies originate? These are the type of questions that school directors often don’t have time to dive into, but the answers are essential.”

The research results will be shared at the WSSDA's Annual Conference in November. Here is a sample of the questions explored in the material:

- How did the state founders' beliefs about race and equity influence them?
- Did enslavement exist in Washington?
- Did Washington have “sundown towns”?
- Why were indigenous children sent to government and religious boarding schools in Washington?
- Which eugenics laws/beliefs were embraced in Washington?
- Which Jim Crow/segregation practices were enacted in Washington?
- How were people of color discriminated against in Washington during the New Deal Era?
- How did guest worker laws impact communities and the agriculture sector in Washington?
- How did Executive Order 9066 (Japanese Internment) affect Japanese-Americans in Washington?
- When did Washington actually desegregate its schools after Brown v. Board of Education?

And one final question to ask, would be how has this history contributed to disparities in education outcomes—and disparities in other sectors—for low-income children, children of color, and children with special needs? Part of the answer is that the policies we inherited were intentionally inequitable – that is, inequitable by design. This research project intends to equip school board directors with historical data as an additional tool to become intentionally equitable in their decision-making around policy and resource allocation. Boards can eliminate structural barriers that negatively impact our historically-marginalized students, and WSSDA is here to support those efforts.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR



Mary E. Fertakis, M.Ed., WSSDA Past President and former Tukwila School Board Director, is conducting the research for this project. She has completed seven, similar state history research projects with the NSBA Equity Department for the Alaska, Georgia, Kentucky, Minnesota, North Carolina, Oregon, and Texas School Boards Associations as part of their “Framing the Equity Conversation” series of workshops.

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Session reflection

PUTTING THE STRATEGIC IN 'STRATEGIC ADVOCACY'

The 2020 legislative session concluded on March 12th. For some, that may seem like a lifetime ago due to COVID-19, but the session proved to be a full and unusual sixty days (followed by another full and unusual 60 days, and counting). The session was heavy on proposed education policy and light on supplemental funding, as predicted. Even so, the Legislature moved multiple education bills to the governor for a signature. Also, our elected officials allocated new supplemental dollars for seismic retrofits, small schools modernization grants, and special education.

While it remains to be seen what “business as usual” will look like, there’s one strategy we’re already honing for the next legislative session. We are hoping to increase student representative and board member engagement. One of our takeaways from the last session was that personal stories move legislators. Students and school directors sharing their experiences can be the difference between a bill with the governor’s signature on it and one without. Next session, we intend to be particularly strategic about encouraging board members and students to give testimony when that local story is needed to move legislators and bills forward.





Lexie Jauregui, a fourth-grader at Sunset View, walked away with the top prize for her sweet potato chip nachos.

OURKIDS

Kennewick's Future Chef

From Hawaiian chicken burgers to pizza quesadillas, 10 young chefs in the Kennewick School District dreamed up new recipes inspired by their favorite lunches. The results were healthy and creative, not to mention delicious!

The students – from ten different elementary schools – were finalists in this year's districtwide Sodexo Future Chefs competition.

Lexie Jauregui, a fourth-grader at Sunset View, walked away with the top prize for her sweet potato chip nachos. Lexie eventually went on to win the 2020 Sodexo Future Chef Challenge.

"I feel great. I feel excited and my family is excited, too," Lexie said. Watch a video of her elation as she finds out about the award at ourkidswa.com.



Our Kids
Our Future



This story and many more can be found at ourkidswa.com. Let districts statewide see your good news by sending it to ourkids@wssda.org.



ONCALL: Crisis communications

Be radically clear in your crisis communications

Storytelling is a powerful form of communication, but not amid the COVID-19 pandemic. This is the time for "radical clarity" in school communications. You must deliver the information people want to know as concisely, specifically and easily as possible.

Don't confuse what people want to know with what you think they need to know. Those are not always the same. Remember the caveat of good writing: show, don't tell.

What is "radical clarity?"

It's writing that gets straight to the point. It's writing stripped of pretense, agenda or elaboration. It's terse but not brusque. It's like a brief DIY video. "This is what to know about ..."

Think short sentences and short paragraphs with enough variation to be conversational. Another way to think of it is providing a quick-hit bulleted list of responses to what people are asking about.

Understand your audience

Effective school district communication, especially during crises, is based on understanding the audience and communicating what the audience will want to know.

Radical clarity might sound cold-hearted but remember that the audience—parents, teachers, bus drivers, students or others—wants to know what affects them. Words of commiseration or appreciation are lost when they stand between the audience and the news. The best way to demonstrate caring is by understanding what the audience wants and immediately providing that information in bite-sized nuggets that easily can be absorbed. To do otherwise is to be self-serving and counter-productive.

What does the audience want to know?

Ask them. If the audience is parents, talk with several. Read their social media posts. Ask for their specific questions, so long as you don't come across as out of touch.

Make it easy

Consider the audience's time. Don't waste it by sending an email that says, "The Hughesville School District has provided updated guidance on such-and-such. Click here to read it." Put the "updated guidance" in the body of the message. The recipients have opened the email; don't ask, or expect, them to take another step. Links to additional information are fine if used judiciously, instead of an expectation being placed on the recipients.

Storytelling is good. You may want to post success stories people can draw encouragement and inspiration from, but don't mix storytelling with providing information. Anecdotes will come across as unwanted tangents, no matter how relevant they might seem to their authors.

This was excerpted from a longer article that appeared in WSSDA's OnCall. Subscribe to OnCall for ready-to-use district communication content, tools, and tips.

direct

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



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WSSDA *Direct* is evolving. Our hope is that it will grow into a platform that helps school directors share their knowledge, experience and perspectives with each other. In this way, it will become a resource informing and reflecting the work of Washington's school boards. *Direct* will be published quarterly. The views expressed by individual authors do not necessarily represent WSSDA policies or positions. If you have a disability and need this publication in an alternative format, please contact our Communications department.

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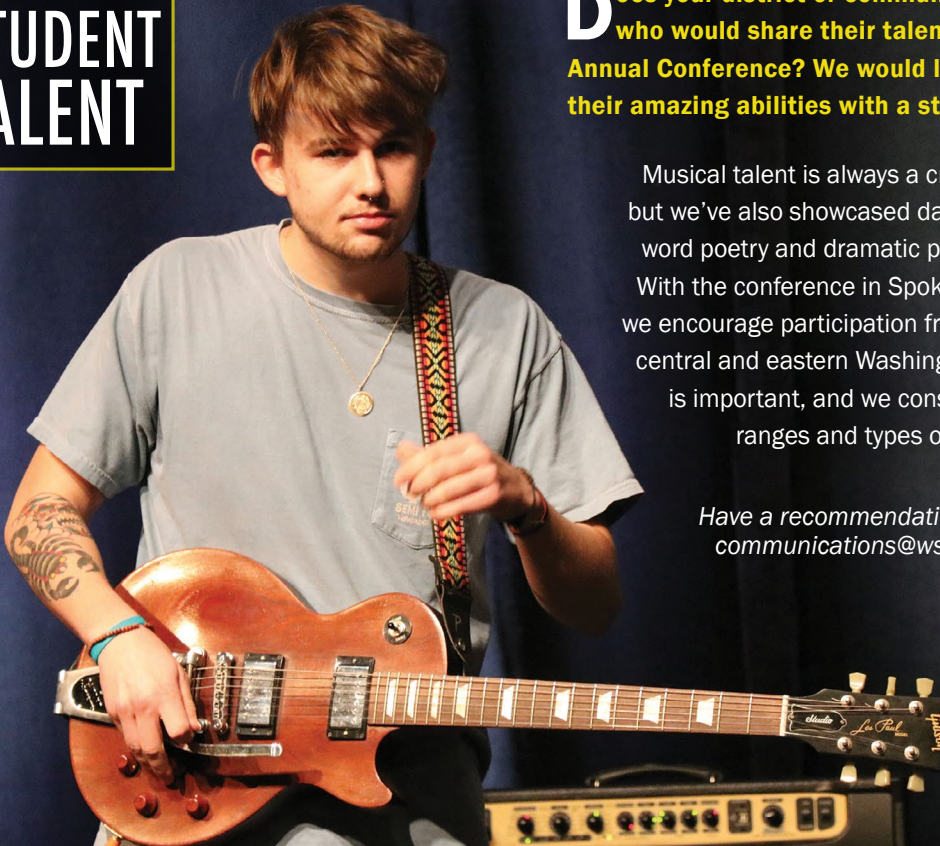
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Have a recommendation? Send it to communications@wssda.org.