

Danny Edwards — President-elect Candidate Statement

My adventure in school board service began in 2007, and no one was more surprised than I how passionately I would embrace the role. As I learned more and more about how vital our voice is for the children of our community, I noticed the impact in other school districts, as well. I was encouraged by former WSSDA Leadership Director, Phil Gore to enroll in Leadership WSSDA in 2010, and this fueled my desire to do and learn more. This leadership opportunity propelled me to run for the WSSDA Legislative Committee, and was chair two years later, serving two terms. I've remained on this committee ever since, as I view the work done by this amazing group of people some of the most important in our organization. Through the legislative work, I was inspired to participate in the Federal Relations Network to share our voice and needs at the federal level.

One advantage of serving for so many years on the WSSDA Legislative Committee is the size of the committee that represents the entire state. There are two representatives from each of the eleven Director Areas, except DA2, which has four. Every part of our state has a voice, and these people are not shy! We have lively discussions and don't always agree. Isn't that the point? What we come away with, however, is consensus. We respect the fact that each voice in that room is an advocate for their students and their communities. The impact and important work of this committee has a significant influence on the education of our students.

This is an exciting time for WSSDA. We have dynamic leadership and a mission and vision that are direct and to the point. WSSDA belongs to the members, and provides the tools and resources our members need, necessary to ensure that all students have the opportunity to receive the education that they are constitutionally entitled to. My goal is to continue building on the momentum that has been generated over the last few years. We experienced an unfortunate bump in the road this year that no one could have anticipated, yet due to the strength of our leadership, we are and will come out of this stronger and better. I want to continue to be a part of that!

There are many issues that are very important to me, particularly Special Education and IDEA funding, and the continuing equity issues we face. However, the disruption of the COVID-19 pandemic has moved to the forefront of issues and needs to be addressed now and in the coming years. I'm optimistic that this

unprecedented issue will soon be behind us. None of us saw it coming, yet we responded the best we could. Our communities might not have agreed with many of the decisions that we were forced to make, but in most cases, they did see strong leadership from the local school districts.

Finally, many former school board directors are in state legislative positions today. Even so, we need to continue building strong relationships in Olympia and educating our elected officials on the complexities of school finance. I promise to continue to provide leadership to solve these continued educational issues.

It has been my privilege to be of service to our organization for the last several years, and I'd be honored to earn your vote for president-elect of WSSDA in 2021.