

NEW:
THERE'S A
CROSSWORD
PUZZLE!
p. 20

WSSDA

direct

QUARTERLY NEWSMAGAZINE

SPRING 2021

Yakima leans in

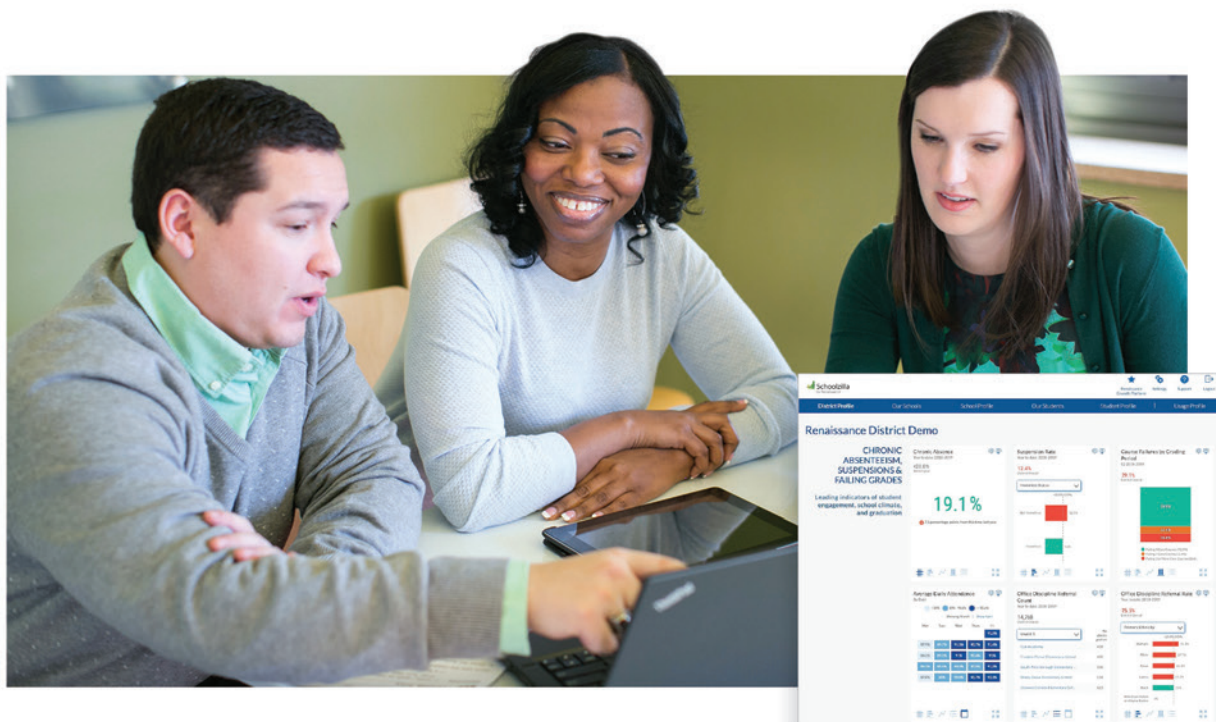
See how crowdsourcing gets Yakima students online, **p.12**; Saving lives in Eatonville, **p.10**; In the spotlight: Director Drayton Jackson shares his aspirations, learnings and more, **p.11**; Student voice: Hanford High's Shreya Mehta shares a book review, **p.19** And more! >>

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archives, pre-Covid-19



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WSSDA direct

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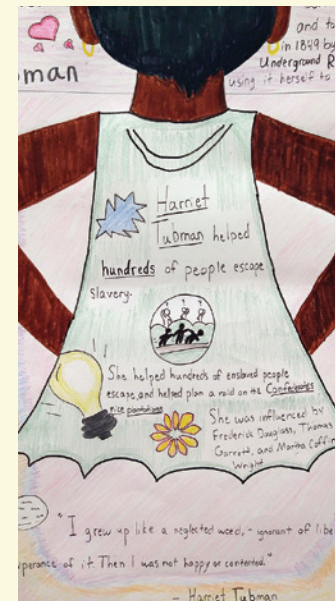
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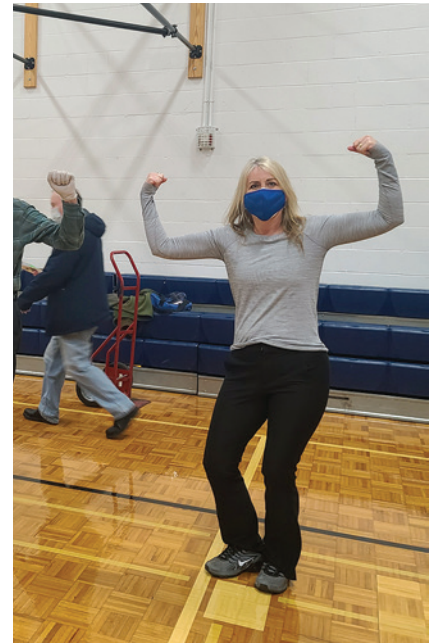
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From the Executive Director

A Spring Renewal Like No Other

Welcome to our latest issue of *WSSDA Direct*! As I write this, good news about access to vaccines is on the rise, especially for our teachers and other school district employees. The number of available vaccines is increasing, and the vast majority of our districts are already offering some type of in-person instruction. Not your typical sort of springtime renewal, but I'll take it!

Though we're not totally out of the woods yet, we can finally start looking beyond COVID-19. Let's take stock of lessons learned and how to apply them to a post-COVID world. To help you do that, have a look at **p. 12** for some of the great work Yakima School District has done expanding its community partnerships and Wi-Fi access for students.



Saving lives in Eatonville, see **p.10**

And speaking of community partnerships, see **p. 16** for an article on data sharing between school districts and local tribes. Originally published in *WSSDA's Policy and Legal News*, we're republishing it in *Direct* to make sure the topic comes to the attention of all school boards.

And let's try something a little different on **p. 20** with *Direct's* first-ever crossword puzzle! But, being who we are, you'll see it's geared toward board professional development. The puzzle is drawn from the budgeting for school directors series within our OnBoard training system, which you can learn more about at wssda.org/onboard.

And finally, thank you to School Director Drayton Jackson of the Central Kitsap School District for lending his voice to this issue of *Direct*, on **p. 11**. Director Jackson is the first "director spotlight" we're publishing, with many more to come.

And thank you to all school directors for using your voice to make WSSDA the vibrant organization it is today! From serving on committees (**p.9**), participating in events like the Legislative Conference (**p.8**) and many other ways, your engagement with WSSDA helps each of us build a stronger K-12 education system. Thank you for your continued leadership.

Tim Garchow

Tim Garchow, WSSDA Executive Director



From the Board President

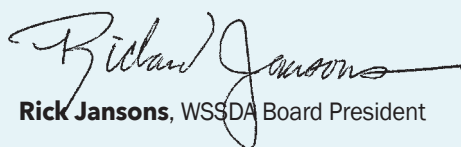


Although passionate about educating our youth and dedicated to their schools, most school directors don't come to their positions with prior experience as a teacher or educational professional. I am no different. My background is in construction and nuclear work at the Hanford site near Richland. But as school directors, we owe it to our students and constituents to learn as much as we can about our role as policymakers and educational leaders.

Like you, my goal is to serve my district's students and community as best I can. I've learned a lot about schools and district leadership in my nearly 20 years as a school director, but there's always more to learn. One of the best tools I've found for my professional development is WSSDA OnBoard.

OnBoard astonished me during my first training. I attended the state funding and budgeting training, and the contents were immediately useful. I learned details that even some of my district professional staff were unaware of, which helped me with setting and approving our budget. I learned about state and federal funding, levies, and how levy equalization is determined. I received information that empowered me to ask key questions during my own district's budgeting process. The information helps me monitor our budget as we work through the year. And I learned about state budget coding systems that helped me decipher many types of information.

Best of all, the WSSDA Leadership Development staff purposely designed OnBoard to be delivered using best practices for adult learning. There are NO boring lectures, dry reading, or uninteresting content. Instead, you practice skills and tools you can use in your district immediately. The training is interactive which allows you to work with people of different backgrounds and skill-sets, learning from them and sharing experiences that will improve your work as a school director. The WSSDA Leadership Development staff are developing more training courses as WSSDA grows its member services. Check out the current offerings for WSSDA OnBoard at wssda.org/onboard. Be on the lookout for new courses as they become available. They are low-cost, and offered virtually during the pandemic. I guarantee it's worth your time!


Rick Jansons, WSSDA Board President

Branch UPDATES

Leadership Development –Tricia Lubach

As the days grow longer and spring brings the promise of renewal, it's impossible not to wonder how our world will renew itself after such an extraordinary year. How do you plan ahead this spring when so many uncertainties remain about the coming school year? "What if we could...?" is a powerful mindset to adopt when prioritizing student needs while developing your budget. What if you could provide flexibility that offered the best of virtual learning and the irreplaceable connections of in-person school? What if we asked students what they hope school will look like and let that be our guide? What if the adults worked together to overcome the traditional barriers to change—including financial constraints, contractual issues and worn-out traditions—to make education relevant for today's students? Like a seed waiting for the signal to sprout, school leaders are taking stock of what they've learned to build a more equitable, flexible, and relevant education system.

Strategic Advocacy –Marissa Rathbone

Despite social distancing, we have continued working closely with our legislators to either move policies forward that align with WSSDA positions or amend/stop those that do not. The house of origin cutoff for new legislation occurred in early March. Many proposed policies that would have impacted K-12 public schools didn't make it through. We are left with only a few potential new bills that would impact schools, and our advocacy focus remains on budget stability and the resources needed to reopen. Legislative Conference and Week on the Hill gave us the opportunity to learn and communicate about important legislation that remained alive in the current session. Your voice has been reflected in all of these steps, and we look forward to seeing what new perspectives you have as you submit proposals (March 15–May 14) to amend or create permanent and legislative positions for WSSDA.

Policy and Legal –Abigail Westbrook

We hope you saw the new FAQ about adding an in-person component to your board meetings under the current waivers and suspensions to the Open Public Meetings Act (OPMA). We understand how complicated holding a board meeting has become so we developed the FAQ to help make your considerations easier. We also hope you saw the February edition of *Policy & Legal News*, which included information on model policy revisions for

Student Discipline, Emergencies, and Comprehensive Sexual Education. Stay tuned for a new model resolution related to adopting a plan for waiving high school credit for the class of 2021 that aligns with emergency rules proposed by the State Board of Education going into effect soon.





Welcome, Spring!

LOOKING BACK, PLANNING FORWARD

Regional meetings bring the opportunity to become a more effective and knowledgeable school board member. Plus, meeting board members from other districts is a great way to learn from and support one another. Mark your calendars for the upcoming spring meetings which begin April 19th and run through May 26th.* Organized by director area, school board members will have the opportunity to network with their regional peers and engage in small group discussions focusing on what we have learned from COVID-19 and how we can use that knowledge to improve student supports and learning opportunities. Other topics on the docket include shared experiences and best practices; equitably addressing learning recovery; assessment and accountability strategies; and what the fall may hold with regard to in-person learning. Register online to save a spot: wssda.org/regionalmeetings. There's no charge and no need to travel; all meetings are virtual. * See pg. 9 for the full list of dates and districts.

EQUITY in ACTION

Educational Equity:

TAKE THE NEXT STEP

Are you ready to supercharge your equity work? Then register for the fifth annual Equity Conference sponsored by WSSDA, WASA and WASBO. The Equity Conference is known to sell out, but this year it's happening virtually, so seating is unlimited. The conference will take place during two half-days on May 18-19. Settle in for some learning and inspiration from 8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. each day.

The conference is structured to offer a progression that begins with looking at the history of discrimination in Washington state that has shaped many of today's challenges. Former WSSDA president and current WSSDA leadership consultant Mary Fertakis will present *The History We Didn't Learn: Washington State's History Through a Racial Equity Lens*. Then, we'll delve into fresh thinking on the full spectrum of equity and educational justice. Breakout sessions and keynote speakers will keep us moving on our equity journey.

Finally, the event concludes with the voice of students: *Our Words—Our Stories: The Power of Student Voice*. The AWSL Student Equity Cohort members will bring student perspective, hope and insight to life through the creation of a student-centered equity guide.



Mirko J. Chardin, one of eight speakers presenting at this year's Equity Conference.

Photo by Keith Nordstrom, courtesy of Wheaton College



ONCALL: Whats your style?

Good leaders have more than one leadership style in their toolkit. Part of being a good leader is learning which opportunity calls for each response.

Laissez-faire, aka “Just leave it on my desk” leaders don’t supervise directly or provide regular feedback. It’s useful when employees are already highly experienced; it’s also a good style to use when assessing staff. A new leader in a school district, not wanting to step on toes, might employ this style first.

Autocratic, or top-down leaders make decisions without the input of others. This can be good for employees who require close supervision, or are learning new positions. Employees may be out of practice making decisions and need you to step in with authority.

Participative leadership values the input of team members and staff, while the responsibility of making the final decision rests with the leader. This style boosts morale. Employees can make contributions and feel their opinions matter. When a district needs to make changes within the organization, the participative leadership style helps employees accept changes.

Transactional leadership is good in concert with the participatory style. Once everyone agrees on a goal, and the steps to achieve it, rewards can be set into place for participation. In this case, a leader might choose to add a transactional aspect to the new challenge.

Transformational, “Let’s put it all together” leadership is about change. This leader works with subordinates to identify needed change, creating a vision to guide the change, and executing the change in tandem with committed members of a group. They focus on the big picture and delegate smaller tasks.

An administrator who wants to make a big transformation needs to gather input on the problem and potential solutions via the **participative** style. When employees show they are on-track, the administrator can use the **laissez-faire** style of leadership, focusing more attention on employees that need more support, possibly with a more **autocratic** style. When the participative process results in goals that not everyone is on board with, a **transactional** leadership style can help push the team over the line into success. As a leader, you set the tone. Your attitude trickles down. If you seek out the best opportunities for your team, your schools, and your students, that attitude will rub off on your staff, creating a positive environment.

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.

UPDATES

Growing and goal setting SCHOOL BOARD SELF-ASSESSMENT

School directors consistently report that WSSDA’s free board self-assessment survey is a great way to grow. “Results from the self-assessment help boards dig into critical issues that can hold boards back. By seeing how they rate their own performance, honest and productive conversations happen organically,” said Tricia Lubach, director of leadership development. “The results can also show where boards have responses that vary widely from each other. That creates a rare opportunity for conversations about where they are not on the same page and how to increase cohesiveness.” Based on the Washington School Board Standards and scientifically validated research, the survey can be completed from any computer or mobile device in 15-20 minutes. WSSDA then creates a detailed report for the board-superintendent team. For an even deeper experience, a facilitator can give a guided analysis of the assessment results during a board workshop to help the team establish goals and identify next steps to improve performance.

Where are we now?

AT A GLANCE

Once a year, school board directors have the chance to propose additions or amendments to WSSDA’s legislative and permanent positions. That’s a school director’s **first step** to ensuring that WSSDA represents their board’s voice at the state and national level.

The second step is participating in the democratic process of WSSDA’s general assembly in September. That’s when WSSDA members (every school director in the state) have the opportunity to vote on all the proposals.



2021 TIME LINE

3/15 – 5/14

Window open for submitting permanent and legislative position proposals (closes 5pm)

MAY–JUNE

WSSDA committees review and refine positions for consideration by the General Assembly

MAY 14

Last Day to Submit WSSDA Position Proposals

JULY

Legislative handbook is produced

AUGUST

Distribute handbooks and help boards get ready for the assembly

AUG–SEPT

General Assembly orientation webinars offered

SEPTEMBER

General Assembly

OCTOBER

WSSDA staff, Board of Directors, and Legislative Committee work together to draft priorities for the 2022 legislative session

Becoming a school board member

The filing period to run for a seat on your local school board opens **May 17** and closes **May 21**. It's a short window, so if you or someone you know is thinking about running for school board, now is the time to get ready.

The role of a school director in Washington state is challenging and rewarding. The past year in particular, has reinforced the feeling that "only superheroes need apply." In reality, every school board member can bring value to the governance team with unique perspectives and backgrounds that enhance informed decision-making and innovative thinking.

During this election year, you may have openings on your board and questions from community members about what school boards do. Consider encouraging thoughtful people in your community to consider board service. Let them know that adding their voices to boardroom discussion can help provide a rich educational experience for your students.

To help people considering a run for the school board, WSSDA has some great resources you can share with them at wssda.org/run.

Here are some key dates for school director elections: May 17–21 is the window for filing, July 14–August 3 is the primary election, and the general election is October 13–November 2.



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ONcall

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— Marti Kline, Iowa Association of School Boards

LEARN MORE AT WSSDA.ORG/ONCALL

Takeaways from the Legislative Conference

Nothing beats a good story.

That was a recurring theme throughout the 2021 Legislative Conference organized by the Washington Association for School Administrators (WASA), Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA), and Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO).

As Senator Lisa Wellman said, "500 people sending letters gets attention, but give me a story, something I can latch on to."

Senator Wellman was one of the Legislature members who pre-recorded interviews to share at the Legislative Conference on February 21. Another was Representative

Sharon Tomiko Santos, chair of the House Education Committee. Rep. Santos said, "don't focus on cost but focus on the impact to students; that's what legislators need to hear." And finally, Representative Alex Ybarra of the 13th Legislative District reinforced the same message, saying, "I need examples of how students may be impacted."

Over 450 people attended the Legislative Conference, which was held virtually for the first time in the event's history. Held annually each February, the conference allows members of our three organizations to align our messages and magnify the impact of our collective advocacy, which happened during the subsequent "Week on the Hill."

Almost 300 people attended the Week on the Hill virtual meetings with legislators March 15-19. The representatives of nearly every legislative district in the state had meetings with K-12 advocates. Leading up to those meetings, the fate of bills waxed and waned, so WASA and WSSDA's advocacy leads, Dan Steele and Marissa Rathbone, provided an interim update to conference participants.

Legislative Conference and Week on the Hill's lasting power comes from follow-up and continued conversations with legislators. As Senator Brad Hawkins told us, "Don't take a breather...many important things are happening at the end of the session when bills are nearing the finish line, and important adjustments are being made. Stay engaged and on message through the final days of a session."

Legislative Conference emcee Mike Nelson, assistant executive director of WASA, invited attendees to say why they were attending the Legislative Conference. Some are printed here:

"The effort required to keep our students at the 'heart of what we do' has taken much energy...I am here hoping to gather and share energy with this amazing group of folks who have chosen public service as a career!"

"My why: stay current and garner ideas to bring back to my district that will benefit students, staff and community. In addition, making sure of my current talking points with legislators and other governmental officials."

"My why: Make lasting influence and shift public policy to allow all students equitable access to achieving their life goals, without barriers rooted in racism, by working on bold and impactful initiatives across large systems."

"I'm here as a student representative to both educate myself and to be able to better advocate for my generation and class. As a member of studentvoice.org, I want to become more informed on legislative efforts in education supported by schools across my local region, and better understand my personal stance or lend perspective to inform such initiatives."

**Monday, April 19**

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 4

Wednesday, April 21

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 7

Wednesday, April 28

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 9

Thursday, April 29

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 2

Tuesday, May 4

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 8

Thursday, May 6

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 1

Monday, May 10

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 10

Wednesday, May 12

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 5

Thursday, May 20

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 3

Monday, May 24

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 11

Wednesday, May 26

📍 DIRECTOR AREA 6

All meetings are 6 to 7:30 p.m.

Getting acquainted:

NEW COMMITTEE MEMBERS STEP IN

Many school directors devote additional time and energy to serving on a variety of WSSDA committees. These members are typically elected by peers within their director area at the WSSDA Annual Conference each November. Let's extend our gratitude to all the new committee and board members! Their active participation, leadership and continued support is critical in helping WSSDA ensure each and every student has what they need to be successful within our state's public education system. **WSSDA Board of Directors:** Christine Chew, DA 2 Bellevue ■ Julie Bocanegra, DA 6 Evergreen ■ Derek Sarley, DA 11 Walla Walla **Resolutions Committee:** Jeanie Schulze, DA 4 Central Kitsap ■ Donna Sinclair, DA 6 Washougal ■ Norm Walker, DA 8 Yakima ■ Annie Keebler, DA 10 Freeman **Legislative Committee:** Enrique Lopez, DA 1 Sedro-Woolley ■ Carin Chase, DA 1 Edmonds ■ Avanti Bergquist, DA 2 Renton ■ Drayton Jackson, DA 4 Central Kitsap ■ Aurora Flores, DA 7 Manson ■ Chris Baumgartner, DA 7 Quincy ■ Maria Erickson, DA 8 Wapato ■ Ron Mabry, DA 11 Kennewick **Nominating Committee:** Trudy Davis, DA 2 Federal Way ■ Rick Maloney, DA 3 University Place ■ Diane Sundvik, DA 11 Kennewick **Interscholastic Activities Committee:** Deborah Kilgore, DA 1 Edmonds ■ Chandra Hampson, DA 2 Seattle ■ Sally Karr, DA 5 Shelton ■ Ken Gosney, DA 11 Richland.

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Education Consultant
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Registration is open at wasa-oly.org/Equity21



Cheers AND tears

Saving lives in Eatonville

It may not have been the golden ticket, but some would say it is even more valuable. Hundreds of cold people waited in line, some for hours and some overnight, to receive a colored ticket securing their appointment to receive the COVID-19 vaccine.

This happened in January at Eatonville High School, where they hosted an event in partnership with Kirk Heinz, Kirk's Pharmacy and the Eatonville School District to distribute 1,000 doses of the COVID-19 vaccine. The Tacoma Pierce County Health Department provided the vaccines, EMS provided technical assistance and materials such as PPE, doctors and nurses volunteered to administer the vaccines, and the Eatonville school staff volunteered time, food and provisions.

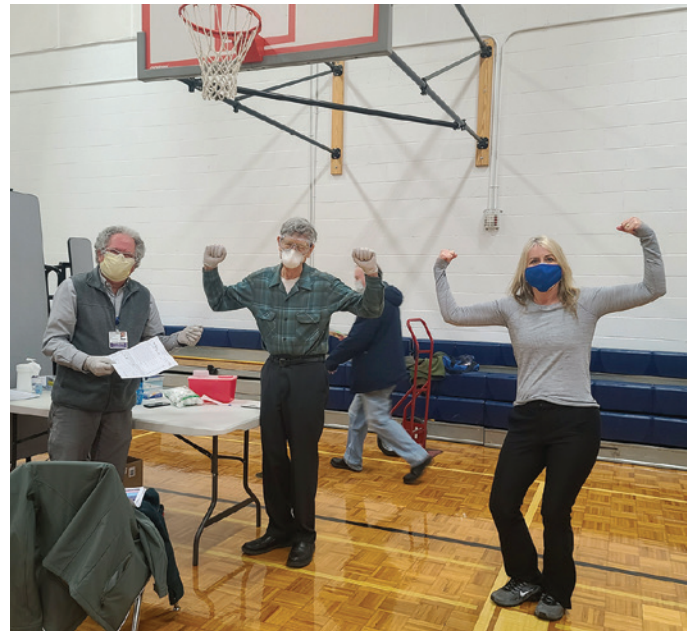
Though the event turned out to be quite the undertaking, it was not the logistical difficulties Eatonville Superintendent Krestin Bahr wanted to highlight. "I saw their relief and happiness," Bahr stated, "I saw so many tears of joy, comments of gratefulness and smiles behind the masks. Some were elderly, and they pushed

“I saw their relief and happiness...so many tears of joy, comments of gratefulness and smiles behind masks.” —Krestin Bahr

their wheelchairs or walkers up the sidewalk strewn with cracks and rocks. Given a colored ticket to come back for their appointment, they beamed and yelled, 'Hooray!'"

As volunteers were vaccinating 150 people per hour, it was described as a day of miracles. "As I walked away, I was struck in my heart with a realization that this event saved the lives of so many who were needing hope," said Bahr. "Many had not been out for a year, at least not with so many people. The volunteers spoke with so many people who wanted to tell us their stories of wanting to live, of what they had done during the pandemic, including one woman who told me she had not hugged anyone for close to a year. This comment took my breath away and still does. To not feel the touch of another person in a hug for that long is unimaginable."

Thank you to the Eatonville School District for sharing this story, and thank you to the volunteers and medical professionals that made the event possible.



Meet Drayton Jackson

CENTRAL KITSAP SCHOOL DISTRICT



Where do you turn for new ideas about serving your district/community? I love reading this magazine and seeing what other school boards are doing in our state. I also pay close attention to the National School Board Association (NSBA) to see what school districts in other cities are doing.

What are one or two issues/topics/challenges that are especially important to you and why? One of my biggest concerns is representation of students of color. When I met with our school board president, Bruce Richards, Jeanie Schulze and our superintendent, Erin Prince, I made it clear that I would be the voice of all students but especially our students of color. I expressed that it would be my goal to increase the number of teachers and staff of color in our district while addressing some of the concerns that our students of color experience. What I love about my district is that everyone agreed that my viewpoints and suggestions would be a great addition to helping our district become better at serving all of our students.

What is the most important thing you've learned through your board service that you'd like to share with others? I learned to develop thick skin and hold my emotions. I have come to realize that many parents, students and staff are passionate about what they are going through, what they experience and how our decisions, as a board, may affect them personally. I realize that at the root of some hateful statements made to us as school board directors, written or verbally, are people's passion for what they are talking about. We have to respect and understand that no matter how harsh, mean spirited or even hateful their emails or comments may be, it's coming from a place of pure truth in their reality. They are advocating for what they believe is a problem or issue that can't be easily solved. Right or wrong, you have to respect their willingness to express their feelings and fight for what they believe in.

What do you do when you're not being a school director?

Besides being a father, teacher and husband, my passion is helping those surviving homelessness and living through poverty. My dedication is to my nonprofit, the Foundation for Homeless and Poverty Management, which supports men, women and children with programs to help people toward sustainability and off the streets. My personal experience with homelessness has given me an understanding of what is needed and what is wrong with the way homeless people are being dealt with and treated.

The power of “Thank You”

By Lisa Keating, school director for Tacoma Public Schools

In a survey of Washington state principals last fall, the Association of Washington School Principals learned that 60% of those principals who responded had considered leaving the profession. I have worked closely with several building principals over the years on programming for social-emotional learning. So, hearing that statistic broke my heart and I couldn't shake the need to do something.

The pandemic has eliminated the typical ways I have contributed, participated, and given back to my community. As elected officials, events and in-person gatherings are critical ways we engage with the public. Absent those opportunities, I still needed to do something.

I decided to write thank you notes to each principal, assistant principal and dean of students in our district. I felt a deep connection to how principals have been a conduit for rapidly changing

and high volumes of information delivered to families and staff. Principals play a significant role in shaping the culture and climate of a school. Sending a child to school is one of the greatest acts of trust a family bestows on school staff. My daughter's first principal set my mind and heart at ease gifting me with the trust I needed to wave goodbye on the playground. Principals are a school's anchor.

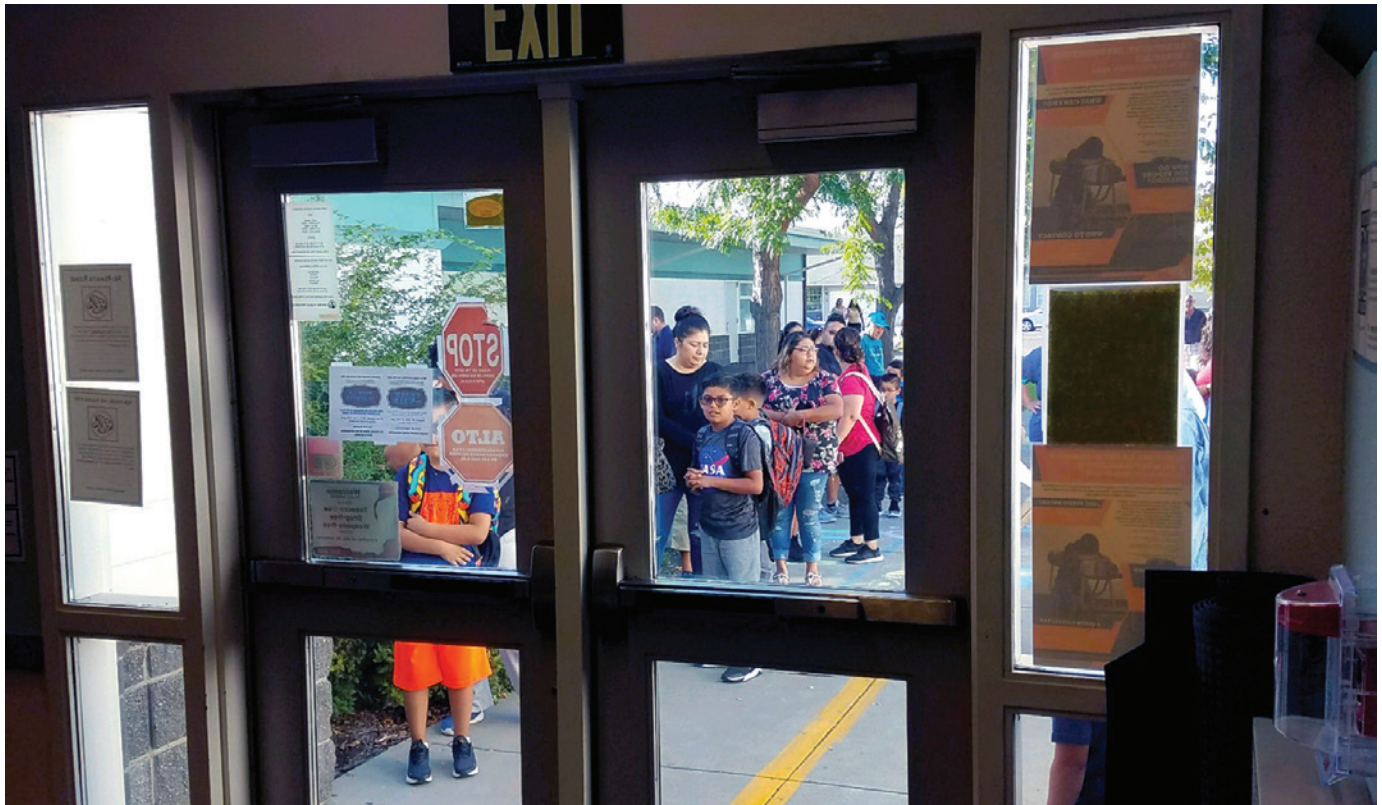


One principal wrote me back, sharing that, in over thirty years in our district, this was the first letter they had received from a board director. Others shared how my note energized them and reminded them they are not alone. Remembering I am not alone during this time has been a lifeline this past year. A note doesn't ease the burden or workload or really change anything. But it does help one be seen and recognized. As we know in our roles, notes of gratitude and thanks are few and far between; that makes them even more valuable when they come.

Pushing out to pull in

How the Yakima School District turned the whole town into a school house

All photos are courtesy of Yakima School District archives, pre-Covid-19



The one-year anniversary of the COVID-19 pandemic recently passed, but lessons learned from the experience will endure. In the Yakima School District, insights about leadership, equity, and how to accomplish the impossible will benefit all of us for years to come.

After the pandemic caused school closures statewide, all instruction had to move online. But to get online, many students relied on the very school buildings that were now closed. In response, the Yakima School District distributed mobile hotspots and shored up existing Wi-Fi networks, but it wasn't sufficient or sustainable. To get online, many students had to confront darkness, hunger, bad weather or other unsafe conditions as they crossed town or found an opportunity to get in range of the district's free and secure Wi-Fi.

Uneven access to broadband internet is one of the most glaring inequities highlighted by the pandemic. To fix the problem, the district had to find a way to get the entire community online, but





“Uneven access to broadband internet is one of the most glaring inequities highlighted by the pandemic...the district had to find a way to get the community online.”

without relying on the traditional solution of bringing students into school buildings.

“When we all went into pandemic mode, the board and superintendent had a number of discussions about how we would connect with our students and our families,” said Martha Rice, chair of the Yakima School Board. “We knew that many of our students didn’t have access to a laptop or even a smartphone, so the first thing we did was approve the purchase of a lot of laptops so that at least the students who had internet, or could get to a place that had internet, could access their remote learning. And then the next step was to ask what else can we do.

That’s when Andy started researching how to create a mesh network over the district.”

“From the tech perspective, there is a want to have a singular solution that encompasses all,” said Andy Gonzalez, director of technology for Yakima School District. “But when you’re looking at a project of this scope, you have to let go of the dogmatic approach and really look at what’s available.”

Yakima Superintendent Trevor Greene likened the situation to America’s moonshot. He said that going to the moon wasn’t something that NASA engineers had been

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– Yakima School Board
Chair, Martha Rice



“From the tech perspective, there is a want to have a singular solution that encompasses all... but when you’re looking at a project of this scope, you have to let go of the dogmatic approach and really look at what’s available.”

– Yakima School District
Director of Technology
Andy Gonzales

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planning on, nor did they have a way to get there, but the president at the time was confident they could do it. “You have to find a way to get to ‘yes,’” said Superintendent Greene. “Don’t look at the impossibility of something; instead, look at the possibility of doing it. That approach will open a window onto what can be.”

And so began a search for the grand solution. In a word, the solution was crowdsourcing, or put another way, decentralizing service delivery. Before the pandemic, the district provided buildings that offered internet access, and students had to come to those buildings. Once the pandemic started, that model no longer worked since school buildings were closed. So instead of making itself the center of Wi-Fi access for students, the district used “the crowd” of community partners to broadcast district Wi-Fi citywide.

“We began pushing into our community and leveraging our partnerships,” said Gonzalez. “So, some of our faith-based partnerships, some of our nonprofit partnerships, we began pushing out instead of drawing the students and parents in.” Taking this new approach, Yakima flipped their service delivery model on its head.

Another example of this approach is Airbnb. Airbnb is a company that changed the concept of a hotel. Instead of building a space that people came to, Airbnb made the whole world into a hotel. The Yakima School District did something very similar. They stopped relying on school buildings (hotels) to provide Wi-Fi access. Instead, they leveraged technology and relationships to turn the whole city into a district internet hotspot.

“We were trying to leverage crowdsourcing in this very unique way. If we had just limited it to ‘we have buildings in this area that can probably broadcast Wi-Fi this far’ it would have been a very limited solution,” stated

Gonzalez. “Where we deviated is putting service delivery at the forefront. We started saying ‘Okay, here’s where I am at work, but what other networks are available? What can we do to leverage that resource?’”

With the vision set, district staff began contacting community partners. “When we were looking for outside places to really augment our current bandwidth, it just seemed natural to reach out to those with whom we already had established relationships,” stated Greene.

“We can do so little alone,” he continued. “But together, we can do so much. When you’re part of a team, you do your part in bringing people together. You realize the strength and talents of others and involve others in finding opportunities. Why would you not leverage that in a leadership position, to really see the potential partnerships that are out there?”

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“Before the pandemic, the district provided buildings...and students had to come to those buildings... So instead of making itself the center of Wi-Fi access for students, the district used “the crowd” of community partners to broadcast district Wi-Fi citywide. ”



“The Yakima School District succeeded in building a mesh network of Wi-Fi signals, but it wasn’t the first mesh network they had built. The first mesh network they created was a human one.”



When asked how these partnerships were initially made, Greene extended his gratitude to those who had made these connections before his arrival at the district. “I won’t pretend that these [partnerships] were developed in the last year-and-a-half that I’ve been here. One of the great things to happen when I walked in the door is there were already existing partnerships providing resources and services for our students.”

The request was fairly simple. “We explained to our partners that we weren’t asking for money or a handout. We were asking for something that would be a service to our community, and it was something easy to provide,” said Greene. “In many cases, it was using the building to add Wi-Fi equipment or using their existing internet to create a wider online reach for the entire community.”

As the district worked at creating a crisscrossing mesh of Wi-Fi signal throughout town, Superintendent Greene reflected on how to keep the school board engaged and how to make room for staff to tackle the problem.

“It begins with having strong relationships with your leadership team. You then can see where opportunities are and frame those for the board. You bring in the others involved and have a conversation with the board in a way that makes everything as clear as possible,” said Greene.

Greene also noted that being a successful leader includes letting members of your team shine. “I realize that I’m in a role of positional power, and with that, it becomes very easy to not service ideas you don’t come up with. In this instance, it was really allowing [Andy] to use his creativity and brilliance to create opportunity; partnering together first internally, and then externally with our community to make this a reality.”

And there lies one more takeaway from this story—partnering together. The Yakima School District succeeded in building a mesh network of Wi-Fi signals, but it wasn’t the first mesh network they had built. The first mesh network they created was a human one. Weaving together partnerships within the district and then between the district and community-based organizations, that’s what made it possible to solve the technical challenge.

As Yakima’s Director of Technology Andy Gonzalez said, “The broader concept lies in the power of partnership, and how that is a parallel path to accomplishing really anything that we want to do on a broad scale.”

All photos are courtesy of the Yakima School District from their archives, pre-Covid-19

“ You have to find a way to get to ‘yes,’. Don’t look at the impossibility of something; instead, look at the possibility of doing it. That approach will open a window onto what can be.”

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“We were trying to leverage crowdsourcing in this very unique way. We started saying ‘Okay, here’s where I am at work, but what other networks are available?’”

–Yakima School District Director of Technology Andy Gonzales



“ We can do so little alone. But together, we can do so much. You realize the strength and talents of others and involve others... Why would you not leverage that... to really see the potential partnerships that are out there?”

–Yakima School District Superintendent, Trevor Greene

GOVERNMENT TO GOVERNMENT

School districts and local tribes

By Cindy Kelly WSSDA Tribal Ambassador,
Port Angeles School Board Director, and former
member of WSSDA's Board of Directors



In 2018, WSSDA's Board of Directors established the WSSDA Government-to-Government Task Force. The focus of our task force was to create a reference guide outlining all state and federal requirements of school districts with regard to working with tribal partners, including tribal consultation pertaining to the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), government-to-government memorandums of understanding, Since Time Immemorial curriculum, and tribal compact schools. In 2020, the Government-to-Government Task Force supported two legislative bills that became law.

The first legislative bill was **House Bill (HB) 2551—Graduation Ceremonies/Tribal Regalia**, which specifically permits students who are members of a federally recognized tribe to wear traditional tribal regalia and objects of cultural significance at graduation ceremonies and related events. The history of wearing a mortarboard cap and gown at graduation is believed to date back to twelfth-century Europe, when many teachers wore clerical clothing (hoods and gowns) and students adopted the same look. Some historians think that the gowns were especially necessary to stay warm in the unheated buildings where graduations took place. This academic dress from Europe started to gain popularity in America around the time of independence. There was a decline in such dress after the Civil War, but in 1894, the American Intercollegiate Commission met at Columbia University and standardized the style and color for caps and robes. Although Washington state never adopted an official standard for graduation attire, this Eurocentric practice of wearing the robe and mortarboard cap has generally been the expectation.

High school graduation is a joyous time. As school board directors, it is a time for celebrating student achievement alongside of our district's students, their families, and communities. Sadly, some students who are members of local tribes have been prohibited from wearing their tribe's traditional regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies. This prohibition was hurtful because many tribal nations view the wearing of traditional regalia and items of cultural significance as sacred to cultural traditions. Allowing tribal students to wear tribal regalia at graduation not only honors the student, it builds community relationships and cultural understanding that help improve the success of tribal families and communities.

Prior to the passage of the bill, the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) issued a letter calling upon school district leaders and staff to foster inclusivity and cultural responsiveness within commencement and to develop policies underscoring the sovereign and singular rights of first peoples. The letter stated, "This is a tremendous opportunity for schools to acknowledge this important honor and legal right of Native students and tribal nations and also recognize the diversity in our shared community." After nearly unanimous passage in the House and Senate, the Governor

“...some students who are members of local tribes have been prohibited from wearing their tribe's traditional regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance along with or attached to a gown at graduation ceremonies.”

“ This omission of tribes from access to student education records under FERPA has long hampered tribal efforts under ESSA to evaluate and improve the academic progress of Native students attending public school and work to close tribal student achievement gaps. ”

signed HB 2551 into law on March 18, 2020. After the passage of HB 2551, OSPI issued **Bulletin 045-20**, encouraging school district leaders and staff to consult with tribal nations and collaborate with Native American parent advisory committees and Native American education leaders to resolve any potential issues associated with implementing the law prior to commencement.

The passage of HB 2551 affirms inherent rights assured through tribal sovereignty. Beginning with the 2020 graduating classes, school districts, public schools, and institutions of higher education may not prohibit students who are members of a federally recognized tribe from wearing traditional regalia or objects of Native American cultural significance at graduation ceremonies or related school events. We're excited that WSSDA has revised **Model Policy 2410/2410P–High School Graduation Requirements**, an Essential policy, to reflect cultural inclusivity and the passage of this legislation.

The second bill that the Government-to-Government Task Force supported was **Senate Bill (SB) 6263–Educational Data Sharing Agreements – School Districts and Tribes**. This legislation addressed the barriers to data sharing between districts and tribes. The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) and its implementing regulations govern access to the “student education records” of children attending a school that receives federally administered funds, including public schools. FERPA generally provides federal, state, and local education agencies access to student records, including personally identifiable information kept by school districts without the advance consent of parents/guardian or students. However, FERPA does not include tribes as among the governmental entities eligible to obtain student data without advance parental/guardian consent.

This omission of tribes from access to student education records under FERPA has long hampered tribal efforts under ESSA to evaluate and improve the academic progress of Native students attending public school and work to close tribal student achievement gaps. This is a significant loss because student data analysis is a central tool in evaluating educational practices, tracking students' academic performance, and developing school improvement plans and support services. Tribes need access to the education records of Native students so that they can monitor and analyze the needs and progress of their students and make data-driven decisions to improve education outcomes for Native students.

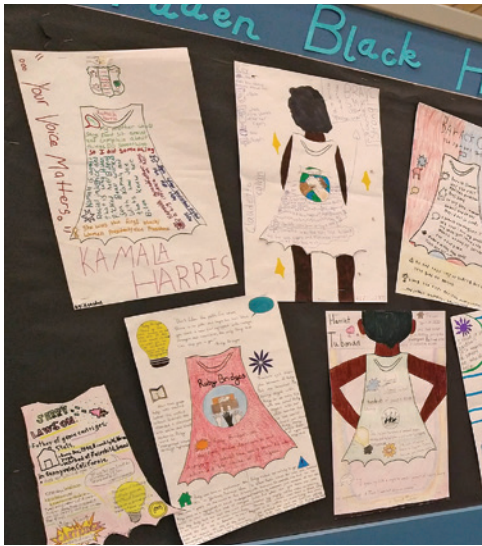
Additionally, tribes are in the best position to track and coordinate Native student data. Without input from tribes, accurate, comprehensive and meaningful data on Native students is often lacking because federal education reporting requirements frequently omit Native students due to their small numbers. Further, the state and local education agencies that do track Native students in public schools are unable to monitor some of the most at need Native students attending schools other than public schools. Tribes and school districts need to work together to close opportunity gaps and increase the graduation level for our Native American students as identified under ESSA and in the spirit of the 1989 Centennial Accord and 1999 Millennium Agreement with the state of Washington.

SB 6263 required WSSDA to develop a model policy by January 1, 2021 for establishing data-sharing agreements between school districts and local tribes. The legislation required that the model agreement would comply with FERPA and safeguard students' personally identifiable information. Having a FERPA compliant template to support the creation of data-sharing agreements between school districts and tribes helps remove a barrier to working together. Importantly, in developing the new model documents, SB 6263 specified that WSSDA would consult and collaborate with the OSPI's Office of Native Education, the Tribal Leaders Congress on Education and local tribes. Additionally, WSSDA considered model agreements developed by the Bureau of Indian Education and model data sharing agreements and procedures developed by national Native educational organizations.

We're happy to announce that WSSDA has developed **Model Policy 4050/4050F–Data Sharing Agreement Between the District and Local Tribes**. This new model policy proclaims the district's commitment to the benefits of data sharing. It is classified as an Encouraged policy. **Model Form 4050F** is the actual model agreement. Districts are not required to adopt the model policy in order to enter into a data-sharing agreement with tribes.

Cindy can be contacted at ctkelly@olypen.com.

“ Without input from tribes, accurate, comprehensive, and meaningful data on Native students is often lacking because federal education reporting requirements frequently omit Native students due to their small numbers. ”



Olympia School District Celebrates BLACK HISTORY MONTH



Elementary, middle and high school students throughout the district celebrated Black History Month this year with special projects, videos, research, presentations and assemblies.

Olympia High School students were treated to a special visit from local philanthropist and author Merritt Long. Long and his wife started the Learning Seed Foundation, which provides college scholarships mostly to students of color in Thurston and Pierce County. He also authored the book *My View from the Back of the Bus*. Long grew up in the South and later moved to the Pacific Northwest, where he worked for the State of Washington and eventually served on former Gov. Gary Locke's Cabinet. His daughter is a graduate of Capital High School.

Long fielded questions from students and told stories about growing up in a time when racism was rampant. He recalled sitting on the back of buses, where a sign labeled "Colored" marked the border between white and black passengers. Black passengers exited from a door at the back of the bus. He also recalled when there were white schools and black schools. Even to a child, it was obvious that the white schools received a disproportionately large share of funding.

"Hard School (Long's elementary school) was so old, it could be called dilapidated. A wooden structure in dire need of repairs and a fresh coat of paint, the floors were often dusty because the immediate area outside the school was all dirt," Long said in his memoir. "Our textbooks were used, having been discarded by the white schools in the area. Often they were torn, with pages missing."

He added during his visit with students, "There was no grass, there were no sliding boards, there was nothing to do other than just run around in circles chasing each other. We tended to get used football gear, used books, it was really keeping in with what was happening at the time which was like, 'we'll just do enough to get by.'"

Students throughout Olympia High School watched a video of the interview with Long during their homeroom classes.

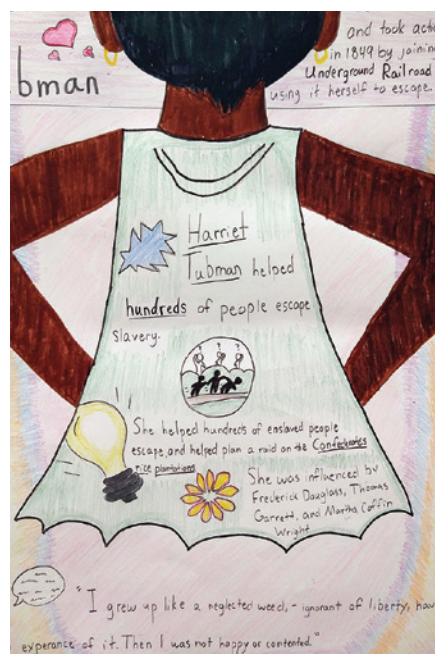
At Centennial Elementary School, fifth graders completed a project on "Hidden Heroes." They researched people that weren't as well known as Martin Luther

King, Jr. They also talked about Rosa Parks and Claudette Colvin. After students researched figures that were better known, they moved on to figures that were lesser-known, but shared a common theme or achievement. Biographies of the "Hidden Heroes" are on display in the hallways of the school for everyone to learn from.

"We started this project to bring awareness to the fact that black figures in history haven't been given their due credit for the amazing accomplishments that they achieved," said one of the teachers who led the unit. "This project was part of a bigger civil rights unit where we talked about the accomplishments and legacy of some lesser-known African Americans in history and in our present."

The project was well-received by student participants. "Hidden Heroes were people who changed lives even by the slightest, but many people didn't know about them or never heard about them — making them hidden," said one student. "You could give Shirley Chisholm, the person I researched, the title as a Hidden Hero because back in her day, no one thought of her as a world-changer until now."

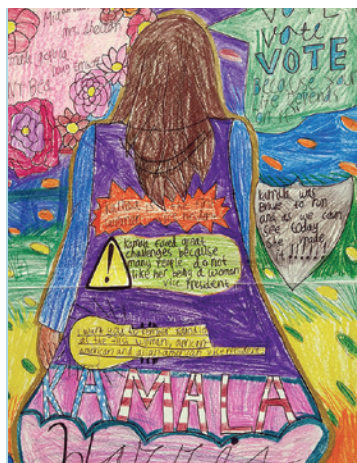
Other students provided similar feedback. "Everyone makes a difference some way or another even if they are not known," one participant said. "This assignment was important because black lives matter," said another.



At Lincoln Elementary School, one student completed self-inquiry research and advocacy around Black Lives Matter. She researched the history of BLM and what it means for her and others. She advocated for all people to understand what Black Lives Matter means and to stand against injustices of race. She presented her findings at a school assembly, along with a call to action.

"The mission is to get rid of white supremacy and build power to intervene in violence inflicted on black communities," said fifth-grader Shelby Sever. "In September 2016, at a high school soccer game in Rochester, New York, 18 soccer players took a knee during the National Anthem. These players were protesting racial injustice and police brutality. Their efforts started a districtwide movement that evolved into a full-day event that works to educate community members of the much-needed work towards equality. This story is a valuable example of collective action within a school district."

Sever encouraged students to complete their own research on the Black Lives Matter movement. She also encouraged donating to refugee camps in Africa.



At Thurgood Marshall Middle School, all students discussed Black Lives Matter at School Week February 1-5 and Black History Month during advisory periods. Eighth graders at TMMS also began a study of the book "Stamped: Racism, Antiracism and You."

This year was the second year at TMMS where a group of students created and produced a video series called the Cornwall Connection. The project began last year with

the idea of an eighth-grade student who felt that the school should do more to celebrate Black History Month. School leaders listened, and the Cornwall Connection was born. The first year, a small group of students talked about a different prominent figure from black history every day of February.

This year, the group of students who help produce the Cornwall Connection has grown. The students write scripts and tell their personal stories on video for the whole school to see. Four episodes in February focused on different Black History Month themes: Black Lives Matter at School Week, Black Hair Love, the Read Woke Movement, and a feature on Thurgood Marshall, along with student reflections on Black History Month. Upcoming topics include Women's History Month, Asian American History Month, and LGBTQ+ issues. Organizers of the Cornwall Connection are working on plans to connect the project with similar groups at other middle schools across the district.

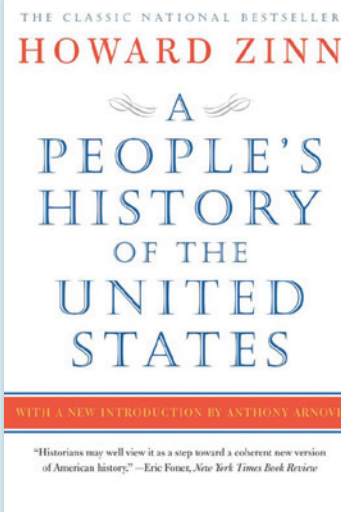


This story and many more can be found at ourkidswa.com. Let districts statewide see your good news by sending it to ourkidswa.org.



Book Review

Shreya Mehta reviews
A People's History of the United States
by Howard Zinn



A People's History of the United States by Howard Zinn brings perspectives of the oppressed to the forefront of American history. This reframing is inspiring to me as an 11th-grade U.S. history student and woman of color because very often women and BIPOC* contributions to American history have been dulled. Zinn's book has done a tremendous job of shifting my views to see U.S. history for what it really is—a story that isn't made by politicians, or a specific kind of person—but a story that is made from the resilience of the American people.

Rarely have I been exposed to American history that goes beyond white, Anglo-Saxon, protestant men, so Zinn's writing feels like a love letter to honest and unheard history. Typically, at the beginning of U.S. history, there is always a lesson on Columbus and brief mentions of the Native Americans whose lives he disrupted. But in reading Zinn's book this year, I was introduced to an entirely new narrative that gives the Arawak tribe justice and views them as people who were so much more than just conquered. This is what is most striking about reading Howard Zinn's book—he gives the "other side" more than just a line about their plight.

A People's History of the United States is a must read, especially in 2021. The time has never been more ripe to thoroughly hear marginalized voices in order to build a more equitable, feminist, and anti-racist world.

*Black, Indigenous and People of Color (BIPOC)



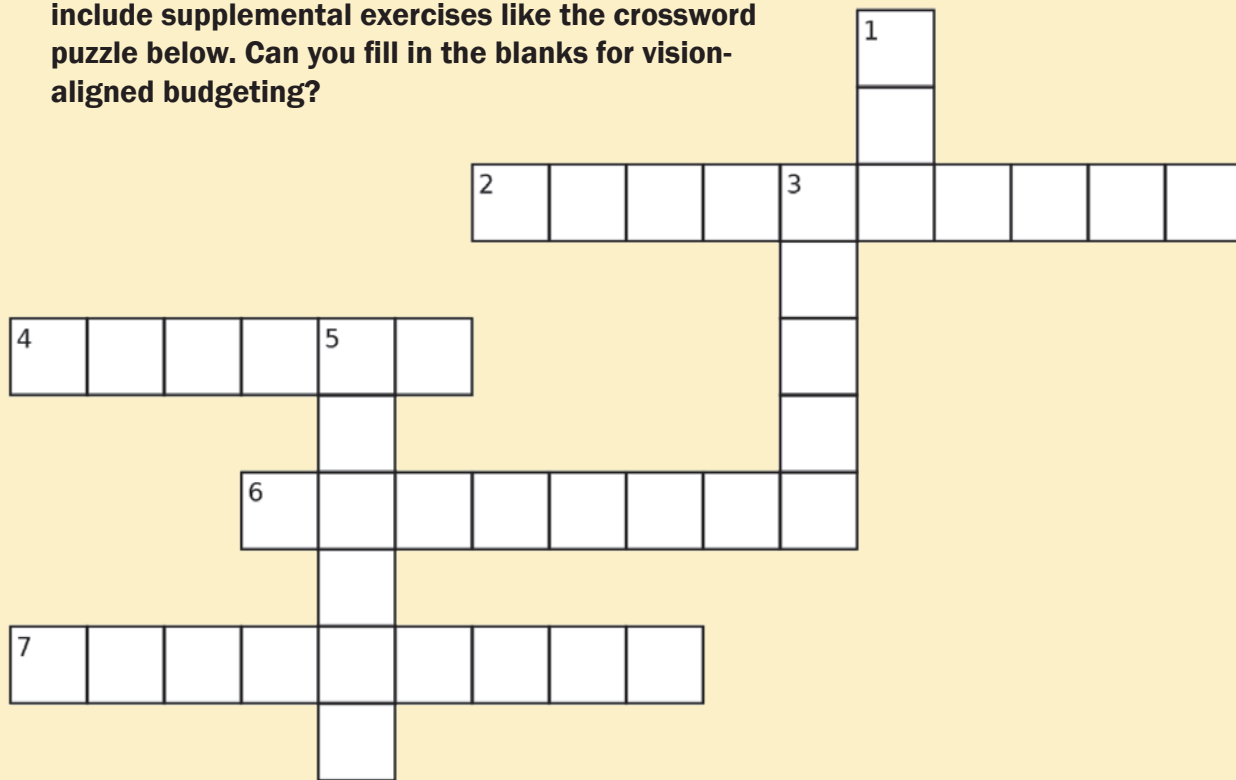
ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Shreya is currently a junior at Hanford High School and passionate about advocacy and STEM. She's a member of the Association of Washington Student Leaders and works with school board directors across the state to formulate and implement equitable student voice plans.

Effective Governance

COMPLETING THE PUZZLE

Part of the WSSDA OnBoard training is assisting school directors with establishing a budget that reflects their district's values. OnBoard workshops are highly interactive and include supplemental exercises like the crossword puzzle below. Can you fill in the blanks for vision-aligned budgeting?



DOWN

1. Overall student achievement increases and achievement gaps decrease when _____ students are held to high expectations.
3. The Panasonic Foundation believes all boards should commit to the mission of breaking _____ between race, poverty and educational outcomes.
5. Districts making great strides in student achievement consider efforts through an _____ lens.

ACROSS

2. The Lighthouse studies show significant academic success gains when districts commit to equity and _____.
4. A board's commitment to equity is reflected in a _____ that funds high-leverage strategies.
6. Equity means each and every individual is provided with the _____ necessary to achieve high standards
7. A commitment to equity is an integral aspect of district _____ planning.

ANSWERS on back page

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29

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CROSSWORD ANSWERS



Coming in the June:

Wapato School District, a Board of the Year recipient, shares how they support native students.



Director Spotlight on Donna Sinclair, board member for Washougal School District.



The latest on leadership, policy and advocacy, features from *OnCall* and Our Kids, Our Future. Plus, another new crossword and more.



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