



WSSDA

direct

QUARTERLY NEWSMAGAZINE

FALL 2021



Student Voice

Stick to the plan

Federal Way explains the process and value of building a strategic plan for your district, p.16; Leadership WSSDA is back!, p.6; The new role of regional meetings, p.6; Demystifying school funding formulas, p.14; Director spotlight: Dave Larson, p.11. And MORE! >>



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From the Executive Director

We're here for you...

As the start of the school year approaches, WSSDA continues to work on all fronts to support you in fulfilling your role as a school director. As new guidance, requirements, or mandates continue to emerge, we know you are doing your best for the children you serve, and we are doing our best to assist you.

To that end, I hope to see you at our upcoming regional meetings. We know the critical role that relationships play in education, and that is no less true for school directors. So, join the meetings and make connections to support and encourage one another. Also, please note on page 6 the new feature of regional meetings as the launchpad for WSSDA committee and board elections.

And if you need an encouraging story, look to page 16 where you can see how Federal Way's student-centered, equity-focused approach has helped them navigate toward better outcomes for their student scholars.

And speaking of student scholars, be sure to see pages 20 and 8, where we share about WSSDA's new student representatives network and the "The Power of Student Voice" pre-conference.

Finally, thank you all for your continued service. I hope the stories we bring you in *Direct* will help or even inspire you in carrying out the good work you do.

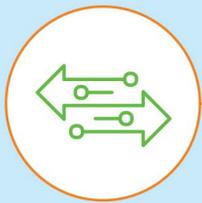
Tim Garchow, WSSDA Executive Director



Long-standing WSSDA board member and past president Debra Long enjoys the moment with WSSDA's longest-serving staff member, Antonio Gonzalez, after cutting the ribbon on WSSDA's new building.

The Math Divide

Adaptive practice to measure and support student motivation and math growth



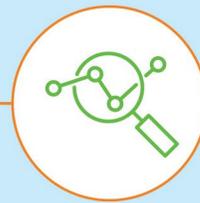
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Continuously adapts for student practice in math or ELA activities, while offering teachers the ability to focus practice on grade-level standards.



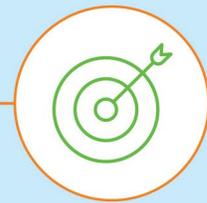
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WSSDA direct

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From the Board President



I have served on my local school board for nearly 20 years. In my time on the board, I have been impressed with the civility our community has shown each other in disagreement over issues. Unfortunately, that hasn't been true over the past 18 months.

I've read reports of police being called to board meetings, verbal attacks and threats to board members, and hate-filled speech being used to pursue an agenda. I fear we are losing our ability to communicate civilly, respectfully, and to assume good intentions of our neighbors. In my opinion, social media and email have lent themselves to an easy avenue to dehumanize our neighbors, and to thereby attack them. As leaders in our community, we each have a role to play in regaining civility in our society.

Like many of you, the members of my board do not always agree with each other. Yet, we have endeavored to work together, with respect for each other, for the benefit of the students we serve. I know that each of the board members with whom I serve base their decisions on what they believe is best for our students. These discussions are done politely, civilly, and none of us always get what we want.

It is our job to model the behavior that will lead us back to civil discourse, and the give-and-take necessary for us all to live together. I urge each of you to assume good intentions of our neighbors, even when it's tough to do so. Let's listen to each other respectfully. Let's look for solutions that work for us all.

We are better together. Disagreement on a board means that we represent the diversity in our community more broadly; that's good and appropriate. However, we must listen to each other, and learn from each other. The result will usually be better decisions for our students, staff and community.


Rick Jansons, WSSDA Board President

Leadership Development –Tricia Lubach

One Washington state school district recently posted a “what’s in and what’s out” list on social media, suggesting that passing judgement is out, and extending grace is in. The concept of grace has many meanings, but one that seems appropriate for the moment is giving ourselves and others permission to be works in progress. We are all works in progress, adults and children alike. It’s easy to see this as children learn and grow, but harder perhaps to recognize that we need to cultivate this same practice as adults. As your students return this fall, notice the hopefulness in their eyes as they greet old friends and new teachers, break open their fresh boxes of crayons, and resume more normal school routines. While we might not experience a vision quite as idyllic as that in the board room, it’s good to remind ourselves of the beauty and grace we’re all working to restore.

Strategic Advocacy –Marissa Rathbone

Being a “brave leader” is often about having the opportunity and responsibility to do uncomfortable things. *Dare to Lead* author, Brené Brown, reminds us that “Leadership is... about the willingness to step up, put yourself out there, and lean into courage. The world is desperate for braver leaders.” There has been much discomfort over the past year and a half, and the complicated, controversial, and difficult-to-talk-about topics have continued to permeate our lives. School directors have been on the receiving end of some painful words and actions while upholding the law and making decisions in the best interest of students. None of these decisions have come easy, and each receives its fair share of disagreement. Regardless, you continue to show up and demonstrate your commitment and bravery. Looking ahead to the 2022 Legislative Session, we need you to continue showing up to ensure that your students and community have a voice—through you.

Policy and Legal –Abigail Westbrook

In the movie *The Princess Bride*, the character Miracle Max, played by Billy Crystal tells the imploring Inigo Montoya, played by Mandy Patinkin, “It just so happens that your friend here is only MOSTLY dead. There’s a big difference between mostly dead and all dead. Mostly dead is slightly alive.” We here at Policy & Legal might sometimes feel mostly dead, but as long as we are slightly alive, we’ll be supporting you, our members, with legal information and resources. Currently, we’re working on the next batch of important model policy revisions while getting ready for the 2021 General Assembly, and keeping Policy Manual Review Services on track. Realizing that what we might previously have considered inconceivable circumstances are now the 2021-2022 school year, we’re striving to be nimble, innovative, and tenaciously hopeful. We might also need to rethink whether we know what inconceivable means. Like Miracle Max, we’re on the job.

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Julie Veal

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Expanding horizons with Leadership WSSDA

Over the past 16 years, more than 200 school directors have spent a year exploring their leadership capacity with a small group of colleagues from around the state through the Leadership WSSDA program. Leadership WSSDA is designed to let experienced school directors deeply explore educational and personal leadership. The program also provides highly engaging, place-based learning that connects participants with state and local leaders. Leadership WSSDA graduates have gone on to become state leaders themselves, serving on WSSDA committees, the WSSDA board as officers, and even in the state legislature. Beginning in January, this biennial program will take place over five two-day learning experiences throughout 2022. Each session will focus on a specific topic and typically include dedicated time with the state superintendent of public instruction, legislators, education experts, and other state leaders. Sessions will be held in different locations around the state to facilitate access to guest speakers and allow participants to explore innovative programs and unique solutions. Graduates of Leadership WSSDA regularly cite the relationships they develop within the close-knit cohort as one of the most appreciated aspects of the program. The application window for 2022 opens in December.

Here's what graduates of the program had to say:

"I learned so much from experiences and stories shared by my fellow class members. It was also an affirmation of my growth, realizing that I had experiences and knowledge to share as well."

"The most valuable aspect of Leadership WSSDA was the relationships built during our time together. They have had a lasting impact on me."

"Leadership WSSDA has value for everyone, whether you've been a director for two years or twenty. One of the most encouraging things for me was to learn that other districts face problems similar to the ones we have in our district and to share solutions together."

>> DID YOU KNOW? General Assembly will be virtual again this year. Make sure your board signs up a voting delegate so your district's voice is represented.



The new role of regional meetings

Starting this fall, regional meetings will play a new and even more important role for WSSDA and its members. This year, regional meetings will act as the launchpad for nominating school board members to serve on WSSDA's elected committees and the board of directors. Conditions allowing, this year's meetings will have both an in-person and virtual option for participation. For each director area, the nomination window will open at the meeting and close two weeks later. Nominations can be made at the meeting or via a self-nomination form online. Eligibility of the candidates will be confirmed and then ballots will be emailed out during the week of Annual Conference. School directors will have until noon on November 19, the first general session day of WSSDA's annual conference, to cast their votes online. If runoff elections are required, they will be held that afternoon. "Allowing our director areas more time to conduct the nomination process will expand opportunity for all school directors to participate," said Executive Director Tim Garchow. Election results will be posted on the WSSDA website and announced at the President's Reception at Annual Conference. So whether it's nominating a peer or taking your own leadership to the next level, please join us and help shape the future of WSSDA.



“Yes, your transformation will be hard. Yes, you will feel frightened, messed up and knocked down. Yes, you’ll want to stop. Yes, it will be the best work you’ll ever do.” *–Robin Sharma*

Coming soon: inspiration, rejuvenation, and humor

This November, a transformed Annual Conference promises to transform you, too, as you strive to lead during these unusual times. The now-hybrid conference has been redesigned to be a fast-paced, multi-media experience that includes many voices for inspiration, rejuvenation, and a healthy dose of humor. Attendees can attend in person or virtually.

Start your learning adventure with deep exploration through one of three pre-conference workshops. Then, the following day brings a new format designed for inspiration, illumination and motivation. Led by the warm, wise and always inspiring Erin Jones as emcee, the general session day will allow you to reconnect with colleagues and an incredible lineup of thought leaders.

The final day offers more opportunities to learn from experts and peers with many options within each of the five breakout session periods. Attendees will also have two opportunities to experience the introductory course in WSSDA OnBoard’s educational equity training.

Finally, cap off the day with friends at the president’s reception while student reps enjoy their own event. The conference ends Saturday night so you can relax and enjoy your Sunday.

DAY 1: PRE-CONFERENCE

Deep exploration of topics most important to you

- 11:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.** The Power of Student Voice
- 11:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.** Board Boot Camp
- 11:00 a.m.–4:30 p.m.** Law Conference
- 4:45 p.m.–6:15 p.m.** Open Government Training

DAY 1: GENERAL SESSION

A day of inspiration, motivation and illumination

- 7:30–8:30 a.m.** Meetings/Caucuses
- 9:00–10:25 a.m.** Welcome & Morning Keynote 2021
WA Teacher of the Year Brooke Brown
- 10:40 a.m.–12:30 p.m.** Mid-Morning General Session with
Keynote Houston Kraft, Author of Deep Kindness
- 1:30 –3:15 p.m.** Afternoon General Session with Boards of
Distinction and Boards of the Year Awards Presentation
- 3:30–5:00 p.m.** Closing General Session: National Superintendent
of the Year Michelle Reid, Q&A with WSSDA Executive Director Tim
Garchow & Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal, and
Message from Incoming WSSDA President Danny Edwards

DAY 3: BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Opportunities to learn from experts and peers

- 8:30–10:45 a.m.** OnBoard Equity Learning Experience 1
- 8:30–9:30 a.m.** Breakout Session #1 (60 min)
- 9:45–10:45 a.m.** Breakout Session #2 (60 min)
- 11:00 a.m.–12:15 p.m.** Breakout Session #3 (75 min)
- 2–4:15 p.m.** Onboard Equity Learning Experience 2
- 2:00–3:00 p.m.** Breakout Session #4 (60 min)
- 3:15–4:30 p.m.** Breakout Session #5 (75 min)
- 6:00 –7:30 p.m.** President’s Reception

A multitude of voices

Adding student voice to the mix of decision-making changes everything. When the students who will be impacted by the board's decisions are part of those very discussions in the board room, you have a genuine opportunity to create the experiences that are best for students. "The Power of Student Voice" pre-conference on Thursday, November 18, will answer the question, "what does authentic student engagement really mean?" Inspiring 2019 keynote speakers Erin Jones and John Norlin will lead this lively, honest, and insightful session featuring students at the center. The workshop is designed for school directors, students and superintendents to spur conversations within your district about listening to the wisdom of students during decision-making. You'll learn strategies to ensure your board is hearing a multitude of voices and perspectives, not just those that are easiest to access. Student board representatives will share why you should have student reps on your board, how to provide space for them to engage meaningfully, and how to shift to student-driven decision-making. At the end of the session, you'll leave with best practices, tools, and plenty of inspiration to hear from your own students.



Photo by Allison Shelley for EDUImages

Welcome **BROOKE BROWN!**

When Brooke Brown was named the 2021 Washington State Teacher of the

Year last October, most schools were teaching remotely. The typical year of travel, where the teacher of the year has visits and speaking engagements around the state and sometimes beyond, was disrupted by the pandemic. On top of that, Ms. Brown was expecting a child, due in July 2020. For this English Language Arts and Ethnic Studies teacher from

Washington High School in the Franklin Pierce School District, having "a lot on her plate" was a bit of an understatement. Brooke describes how she got through this and other challenging times in the introduction to the book "Bridges to Heal Us" by her friend and former teacher Erin Jones: "I have learned that through difficult things, when our circumstances are outside of our control, we must shift our perspective. We cannot shrink and step back. We must make space for grief and acknowledge its presence so we can continue to show up. We must dry our tears and get back to life. Community and connection are what we need to get through this pandemic and through life. We need one another."

Brooke will share her message of resilience and empathy as a cure for disconnection in her keynote at the WSSDA Annual Conference in November. As a special bonus, Brooke and Erin Jones will team up for a breakout session, bringing generous doses of energy, wisdom and fun to the learning.



Photo by Pacific Lutheran University

Making a commitment to educational equity

ADDING TO THE CURRICULUM

OnBoard, WSSDA's professional learning system for school directors, is expanding to include a series of trainings that will fulfill WSSDA's responsibilities under ESSB 5044, passed by the Legislature and signed into law in May 2021.

ESSB 5044 added a training requirement for school directors in the areas of cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion. The law also identifies WSSDA as being responsible for developing the training program and creating model standards for cultural competency for school board members. WSSDA is developing the trainings now, along with updating the Washington School Board Standards with an emphasis on cultural competency and educational equity.

School directors will be required to take training in these topics beginning in 2022. WSSDA is developing the training content and collaborating with other educational partners to determine the number of training hours per school board term that will be required to meet the legislative intent. The goal is to make the training relevant to the work of school directors as well as accessible and realistic within the many demands on their time.

Training Debuts at Annual Conference

WSSDA is not required to begin offering the training program until 2022, but the first course will be available at our Annual Conference in Bellevue. Titled "Introduction to the Commitment to Educational Equity," the course will give an overview of cultural competency, diversity, equity, and inclusion specific to the role of school directors. This introductory training is a required element of WSSDA's equity training program under ESSB 5044.

Space is limited, so those who want to participate in the new training will need to be registered for Annual Conference and then reserve a seat in advance.

"The combination of being interactive and having the opportunity to work with multiple people of different backgrounds and skill sets magnified the benefit of this curriculum."

— OnBoard Workshop Participant



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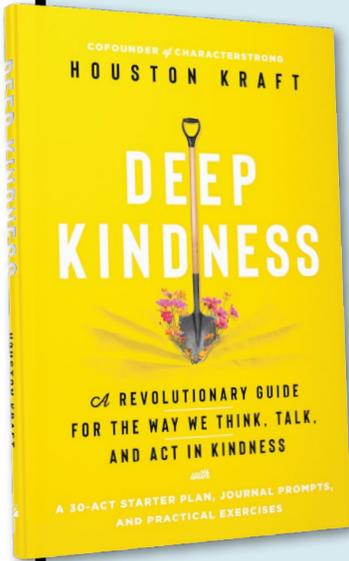
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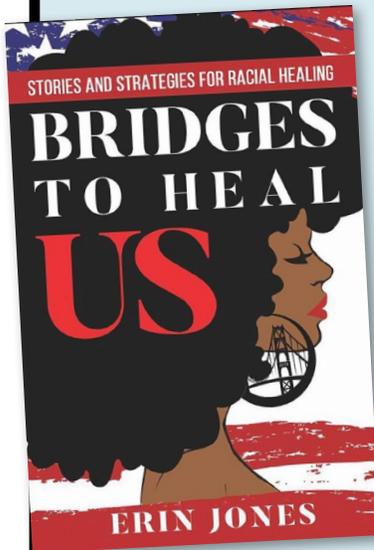
New books for fall reading

Deep Kindness by Houston Kraft,
Bridges to Heal Us by Erin Jones

Looking for a book for that first cool fall weekend that beckons you to curl up by the fire? Here are two terrific options from local authors you may already know. Both will be bringing their wisdom and energy to WSSDA's Annual Conference next month:



HOUSTON KRAFT brings his unique prescription for a world that is divisive, lonely and anxious in *Deep Kindness: A Revolutionary Guide for the Way We Think, Talk and Act in Kindness*. This book is perfect for those seeking to understand that gap between how we think about kindness and how we actually put it into action in our daily live. Deep kindness is hard, inconvenient and scary. It is also exactly what our world needs right now.



ERIN JONES also has a new book out with a forward from 2021 Washington State Teacher of the Year **Brooke Brown** (also a conference keynote speaker.) *Bridges to Heal Us: Stories and Strategies for Racial Healing* features Erin's warm voice and gentle encouragement to get comfortable with the discomfort of talking about race and pro-

vides strategies to increase our skill and comfort with talking about hard things.

Both books will be available at the WSSDA Annual Conference bookstore.

UPDATES

What is a WSSDA Legislative Position?

WSSDA's legislative positions are intended to reflect the interests of Washington's 1,477 school board members. Being adopted by a vote of WSSDA members at the annual General Assembly, legislative positions define and direct the work of WSSDA staff and inform the efforts of school board members as they engage with legislators at the state and federal levels to support public education.

Legislative positions have two components: a title and a desired action. For example, an action might be "WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation that ..." There are currently over 100 legislative positions that have been adopted by WSSDA members.

Each spring, any school board member can submit a proposal to create a new legislative position or amend an existing one. (Via the same process, this is also true for WSSDA's permanent positions, which are more of a statement of values held by WSSDA.)

Submitted position proposals are introduced, debated, and potentially adopted at each fall's General Assembly. Once adopted, the positions become the foundation for member and staff advocacy efforts throughout the year and are the guidebook for responding to and initiating legislative proposals (bills) each session.

Because legislative positions reflect the voice and perspectives of Washington state school board directors, it is crucial for as many school boards as possible to participate in the WSSDA General Assembly.

Example of a Legislative Position:

(Title) School Construction Revenue

(Position Statement/ Desired Action) WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation that establishes an ongoing, sustainable, and dedicated source of revenue that, in addition to Common School Trust revenue, will fully fund the state's responsibility for school construction. At a minimum, the new dedicated revenue should equal the state sales tax receipts from all school construction projects.



Dave Larson

TUKWILA SCHOOL DISTRICT

Where do you turn for new ideas about serving your district/community?

I turn to WSSDA meetings; students and staff; meetings with other districts (e.g. the Road Map Project); books on education topics; national education organizations like ISTE, NCTM, NSBA and ASCD; and local and national press like the Seattle Times Education Lab, Wall Street Journal, WSSDA's eClippings.

SPOTLIGHT

What are one or two issues/topics/challenges that are especially important to you and why?

1. Equity in Funding – Equity in the way the state funds K-12 education is needed to close opportunity gaps. The way the state funds components such as staffing, class sizes, transportation, and technology does not take into account the varying needs of students, especially those coming from lower-income families. The state has persistent and increasing achievement and opportunity gaps that cannot be adequately addressed without reforming the funding system.

2. Role Models - In order to fully engage our diversifying student population, they must be able to see themselves in the staff, the curriculum, all the career pathways, and throughout society at large.

What is the most important thing you've learned through your board service that you'd like to share with others?

The importance of respecting and listening to all voices, especially students. Getting out of the board room and listening in a variety of spaces where the various voices may be less inhibited is critical to getting a more complete picture. Some of the best sessions I have been in were ones where the students were at the center, and they felt safe to express their authentic selves.



Working together to support students

“Strengthening all students for life through participation in excellent, fair, safe, and accessible activities.” -WIAA mission statement.

WSSDA's Interscholastic Activities Committee (IAC) representatives work to address those issues of concern to school directors, which relate to the operation of the Washington Interscholastic Activities Association (WIAA).

The 12-member committee chaired by Chad Christopherson of Naches Valley offers input on WIAA financial affairs, reviews the governance of the WIAA, makes recommendations on proposed WIAA amendments, and attends select WIAA District Area league meetings.

Much like at WSSDA's general assembly, IAC members provide valuable input on proposed amendments to WIAA rules. For 2021, 10 different amendments were proposed. IAC members met with WIAA Executive Director Mick Hoffman to share feedback on the proposed amendments. IAC members were pleased to see WIAA align definitions on gender identity with OSPI's definition to support and encourage all students to participate in a safe and supportive environment.

WIAA and WSSDA work together to better support our students as they partici-

pate in activities and athletics. There are nearly 800 WIAA member districts that oversee athletics and fine arts and host 120 state championship events. River-view School Director and IAC Vice-Chair Lori Oviatt serves as an Honorary Board member to the WIAA Executive Board and provides a voice on behalf of WSSDA.

As we head into the 2021-2022 school year, the IAC would love to hear from you! If you want to learn more about IAC, contact any of the group's members found at wssda.org/iac. Visit WIAA.org to learn more about the WIAA.

225 College Street NE: The New

With growing influence, WSSDA's



Years in the making, August 7, 2021 saw the ribbon cutting ceremony that officially opened WSSDA's new headquarters. The first educational partner to use the state-of-the-art meeting space was the superintendent of public instruction, who photographed the cornerstone (at right). WSSDA has steadily solidified its role as a cornerstone of Washington's public education system. Now, school directors can literally bring the K-12 conversation to WSSDA.

Hub for K-12 Policy Making

headquarters finally look the part.



Left to right: Tim Garchow, Marissa Rathbone, Julie Bocanegra, Derek Sarley, Christine Chew, Logan Endres, Abigail Westbrook, Tricia Lubach, Brenda Rogers, Cassandra Heide, Chris Nation, Rick Jansons, Debra Long, Antonio Gonzalez, Josh Collette, Paul Wagemann, Ken Stanger, Danny Edwards, Cindy Kelly, Chuck Namit, Patricia Namit, Michelle Perry, Sandra Linde, Carolynn Perkins, Monty Anderson, Marnie Maraldo, Lee Anne Riddle, Michelle Choate



Demystifying school funding formulas

by Daniel Lunghofer, MPA

formulas have been a mechanism for funding school districts in Washington for quite some time. Sometimes the formulas are informed by data representing a moment frozen in time. But as time goes on and conditions change within a school year, that data can quickly become less and less relevant. School funding allocations based on archaic formulas no longer serve our learners' varied and growing needs.

Adjustments to school funding formulas have been a long-standing priority for WSSDA members. The information below explains some of the key funding formulas that support our schools and may indicate how we might advocate for more relevant models.

Prototypical School Model

The formula used by the state to allocate the lion's share of state money to school districts is referred to as the "prototypical school model." The formula determines the amount of funding the state will provide school districts to enable a program of basic education for K-12 public school students.

The funding calculated by the formula is for everything defined as "basic education" in RCW 28A.150.210. The funds provided cover various programs like career and technical education, skill centers, alternative learning programs, district-wide administrative support, for example, the superintendent's office,

the business office, and so forth. The funds can also be used to supplement other programs like special education, Washington's Learning Assistance Program, bilingual education, etc.

The amount of money provided by the prototypical school model formula is based on the enrollment in grades K-12 for the school district. The number of students in each grade produces a state-funded number of staff units, including principals, teachers, office staff, custodians, nurses, counselors, etc., which includes funding for salaries and benefits for those state-funded staff. Each student also generates an allocation for materials, supplies, and operating costs (MSOCs).

Additionally, each district has what is called a "regionalization factor" based on median home values in the district compared to the state average. This creates an enhancement in the form of a multiplier for the allocation of salaries

The funding calculated by the formula is for everything defined as "basic education" in RCW 28A.150.210.



for state-funded units (employees), and ranges from 1.00 to 1.20 for the 2021-22 school year. Some districts also receive an additional 0.04 enhancement (so 1.04 to 1.24) based on having a larger number of teachers with more experience and education than the state average.

Districts receive their funding allocation each month based on a schedule determined by the Legislature. For September through December, the allocation is based on the district's projected enrollment numbers, but for January through August, it is calculated based on actual enrollment.

School Construction Assistance Program

The School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) provides additional funding from the state to school districts for their construction projects, including new buildings, remodeling of older buildings, additions to buildings, and the like.

The funding provided by this program is used to pay for a certain amount of the total cost of constructing a building. It pays for construction and directly related costs (for example, architectural and engineering costs), as well as furniture and equipment. It does not cover the salaries of district staff.

SCAP funding is based on a combination of need and legislatively defined rates. There are three main items per project

The number of students in each grade produces a state-funded number of staff units, including principals, teachers, office staff, custodians, nurses, counselors, etc. ...

that determine the amount of SCAP funding possible:

- **Eligible area:** A comparison of the district's projected need, less current capacity, multiplied by a given number of square feet per student in a given grade span.
- **Cost per square foot:** A legislatively defined amount of funding per square foot. For 2020, the rate was \$238.22 per square foot.
- **Funding assistance percentage:** Based on the assessed value per pupil in the district compared to the state average. For 2020, the percentages range from 20% to 97.32%.

These three items are multiplied together to arrive at a total funding amount per eligible project. Anything beyond this amount in the cost of a project is the district's responsibility.

To receive SCAP money, districts must follow a process with OSPI, called the D-Form process, to determine eligibility for a given project. The D-Form process can take many months to as much as two years to complete. Then, the project

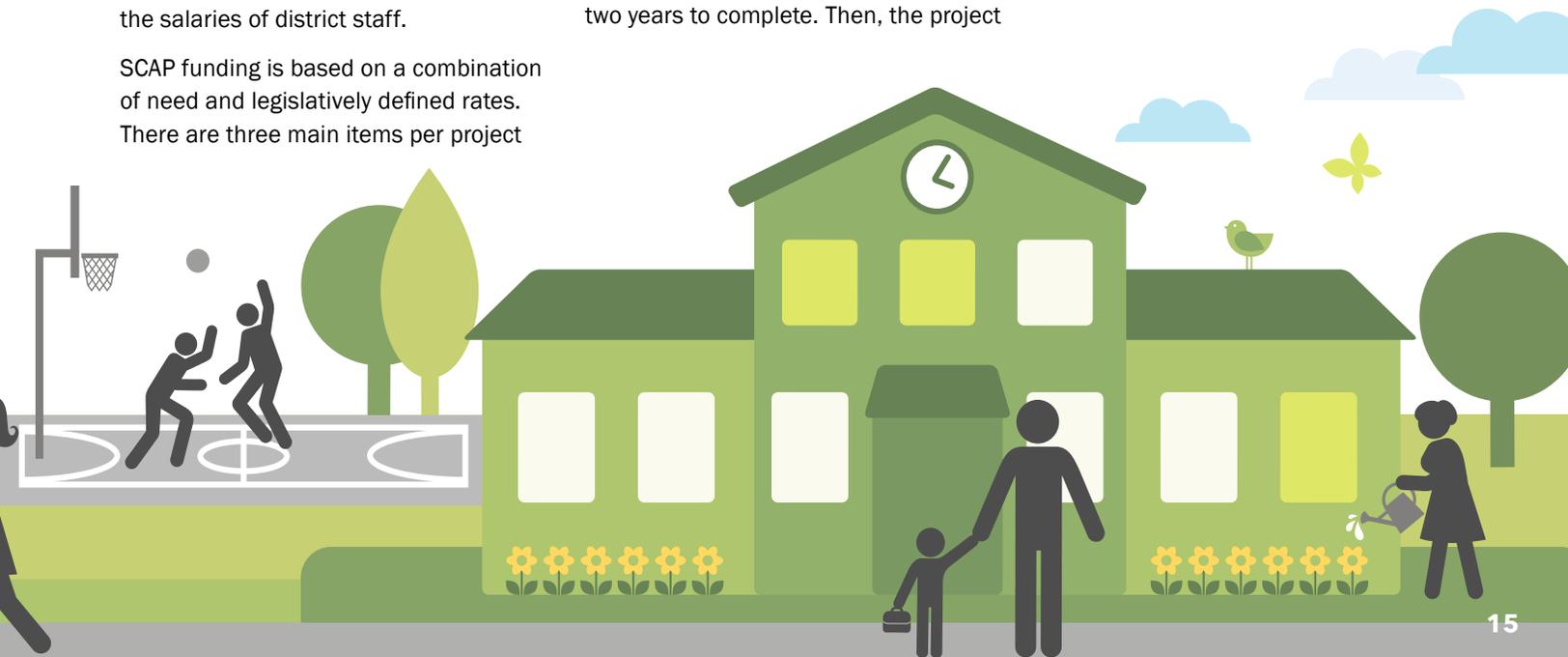
needs to be funded by OSPI once it's included in the state's adopted capital budget approved by the Legislature. It is possible that a district can get preliminary approval from OSPI prior to the project being funded by the Legislature. Finally, the district must generally front-fund their portion of the project, and then apply for reimbursement from OSPI once their local share is met.

Transportation Funding

The Legislature provides funding for school districts to provide transportation for their students. The transportation allocation is primarily for the cost of transporting students to and from school as a part of the regular school day, or academic extended day programs within the program of basic education.

Following a pronouncement from Governor Inslee in 2020, transportation funding may also be used to provide

CONTINUED on page 19



Federal Way

STICK TO THE PLAN



In the best of times, school boards may face a variety of challenging issues. Normally, they might encounter enough thorny issues to fill a box, but the past year has presented enough challenges to fill a box truck! With so many twists and turns required to navigate obstacles, how can a board remain focused on student outcomes? For the Federal Way Public Schools Board, the answer is straightforward—stick to the (strategic) plan.

What is a strategic plan?

A strategic plan is a document that describes the vision a district has, the accompanying goals that serve as markers for achieving the vision, plus the strategies that will support attaining those goals. The plan serves several purposes, including setting expectations for staff and students, and providing parents and other community members with the district's improvement strategies. The main focus of most strategic plans is to improve outcomes for students and deliver the best possible school experience in ways that reflect the uniqueness of each district.

Discover your vision

Dr. Tammy Campbell, the former Federal Way superintendent, said it all starts with a vision for each and every scholar and that it is critical to co-construct your vision by engaging in "large-scale listening." For the Federal Way team, that meant gathering a large number of people to hear them describe what success looks like, with a focus on student voice.

One aspect of their strategic plan that took years to perfect was Federal Way's vision for equity and excellence. This vision

encompasses not only students but also the staff and families within the district. "[It] really calls out what behaviors would be ideal and what you would see if all of these things are working in concert with one another at the staff, student and family level when it comes to equity and excellence," explained Dr. Dani Pfeiffer, the current Federal Way superintendent.

Find your strategy

After you have determined a cohesive vision of district success, you need to determine the strategies you will apply to accomplish that vision. Dr. Campbell said that student voice is their super strategy. "We partner with students every step of the way. As a result, we're able to gain a better understanding of the effectiveness of our strategies and our plan."

Using student voice ensures students have a say in their own outcomes and provides data on how the strategies are working. "Ultimately, students are the reason schools exist, so we focus on positioning their voice as a key indicator of organizational effectiveness," continued Dr. Campbell.

Set your goals

Once you have gained a vision and determined the strategies to achieve that vision, you can set clear-cut goals. Establishing your goals is truly where your plan begins to take shape. The goals are what drive the plan, and therefore the district. They are what you continue to look back on when you are determining success. They are what you present when a stakeholder asks where your district is headed.

For Federal Way, equity is braided across all goals, and like they did with their vision,

the district included students when setting their goals. “Students actually provided one of the goals within the strategic plan. It wouldn’t have been there without them. It’s very important to listen to their voice,” said Dr. Pfeiffer.

Choose your metrics

Once you have set your goals, you need to figure out how you will measure them. The metrics you choose should be specific to the outcomes you wish to see. For example, if your district is looking to close achievement gaps within your district, it is essential that you use multiple measures to capture both small gains and large gains.

You can also use student voice, or scholar perception data, to gauge success. “Scholar perception data is an important part of our data points,” said Dr. Campbell. “We focus on scholars’ experiences, as a means to ensure we are leading with equitable practices.”

Check-in and follow-up

Once your plan is developed and in action, it doesn’t end there. “You can’t just plan and then walk away. You have to have a system of accountability, mutual accountability, focused on student outcomes,” said Dr. Campbell.

Board President Geoffery McAnallo said that the school board plays a specific role in ensuring your strategic plan sees positive results. “For one thing, we align the board’s policy-making with the strategic plan. Then, we make sure we see success.” Commensurate with their role, the board gives feedback to the superintendent on results shown by the data.

But McAnallo also made it clear that promoting success means being disciplined and operating with a clear understanding of the board’s role, which means staying at the policy level. “You don’t go into a surgeon’s office and tell them how to do surgery,” McAnallo says. “We’re not the experts in day-to-day operations. We’re responsible for the scholars and their parents, and we need to make sure that things are working for all of those people, so we monitor results, support the superintendent and the team, and ensure we have policies that guide improvement.”

Look forward to results

There are many positives to leading via strategic plan. In the last five years, Federal Way has seen increased graduation rates, an increase of completed Free Application



Above: Strategic planning meeting



for Federal Student Aid applications, a lower number of students experiencing in-school suspension, out-of-school suspension, and expulsion. But the strategic plan hasn’t only improved outcomes for students; it has also helped drive a specific way of thinking at Federal Way Public Schools.

“This is the culture in Federal Way,” said Dr. Campbell. “Leading for equity starts with the culture and ensuring equity is embedded. By crafting a vision of equity and excellence, then launching our plan from this vision, we are focusing on lasting shifts in practice by our staff that ensure every scholar belongs and thrives.”

Board President McAnallo said, “Federal Way is the most diverse district in the state and fifth-most in the nation. Therefore, it is important that we provide an educational experience that takes all of this diversity into account. We need to make sure every student feels welcome from the moment they walk in the door as a kindergartner.”

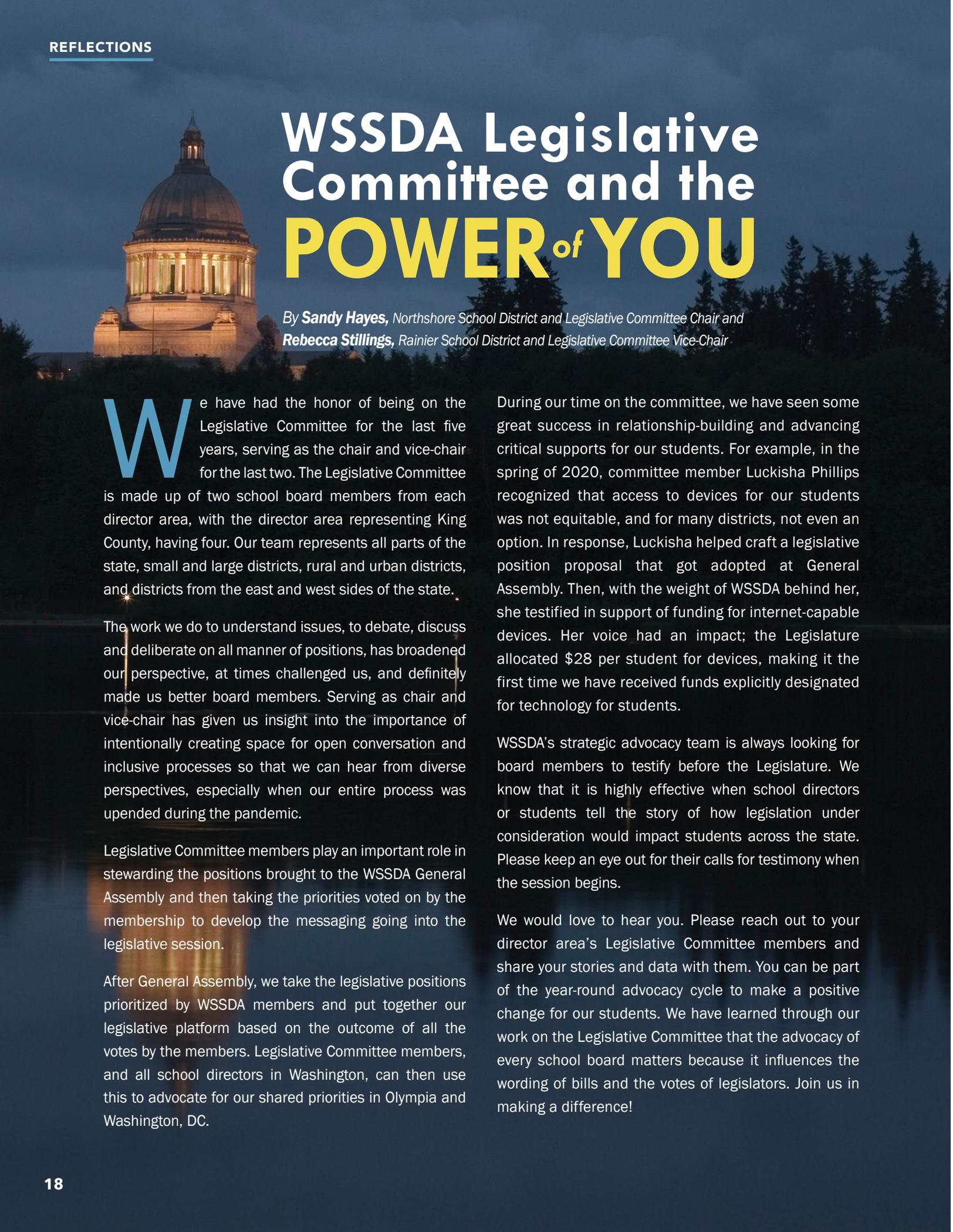
And so, guided by the voice of their community set in the framework of a vision, goals, and strategies, this 2020 Board of the Year uses their strategic plan like a compass to navigate challenges. But as Dr. Campbell pointed out, “The work is never done, and we have much work to do.”



Strategic planning meetings including scholars, staff, and community members



The board clockwise from the back: Board President Geoffery McAnallo, Hiroshi Eto, Ms. Trudy Davis, former Superintendent Dr. Tammy Campbell, Luckisha Phillips and Dr. Jennifer Jones



WSSDA Legislative Committee and the **POWER**^{of} **YOU**

By **Sandy Hayes**, Northshore School District and Legislative Committee Chair and **Rebecca Stillings**, Rainier School District and Legislative Committee Vice-Chair

We have had the honor of being on the Legislative Committee for the last five years, serving as the chair and vice-chair for the last two. The Legislative Committee is made up of two school board members from each director area, with the director area representing King County, having four. Our team represents all parts of the state, small and large districts, rural and urban districts, and districts from the east and west sides of the state.

The work we do to understand issues, to debate, discuss and deliberate on all manner of positions, has broadened our perspective, at times challenged us, and definitely made us better board members. Serving as chair and vice-chair has given us insight into the importance of intentionally creating space for open conversation and inclusive processes so that we can hear from diverse perspectives, especially when our entire process was upended during the pandemic.

Legislative Committee members play an important role in stewarding the positions brought to the WSSDA General Assembly and then taking the priorities voted on by the membership to develop the messaging going into the legislative session.

After General Assembly, we take the legislative positions prioritized by WSSDA members and put together our legislative platform based on the outcome of all the votes by the members. Legislative Committee members, and all school directors in Washington, can then use this to advocate for our shared priorities in Olympia and Washington, DC.

During our time on the committee, we have seen some great success in relationship-building and advancing critical supports for our students. For example, in the spring of 2020, committee member Luckisha Phillips recognized that access to devices for our students was not equitable, and for many districts, not even an option. In response, Luckisha helped craft a legislative position proposal that got adopted at General Assembly. Then, with the weight of WSSDA behind her, she testified in support of funding for internet-capable devices. Her voice had an impact; the Legislature allocated \$28 per student for devices, making it the first time we have received funds explicitly designated for technology for students.

WSSDA's strategic advocacy team is always looking for board members to testify before the Legislature. We know that it is highly effective when school directors or students tell the story of how legislation under consideration would impact students across the state. Please keep an eye out for their calls for testimony when the session begins.

We would love to hear you. Please reach out to your director area's Legislative Committee members and share your stories and data with them. You can be part of the year-round advocacy cycle to make a positive change for our students. We have learned through our work on the Legislative Committee that the advocacy of every school board matters because it influences the wording of bills and the votes of legislators. Join us in making a difference!

To receive SCAP money, districts must follow a process with OSPI, called the D-Form process, to determine eligibility for a given project.

transportation of meals or instructional materials for students in a remote learning environment. This funding cannot be used for athletic events, field trips, or after-school events that are not part of the academic extended day.

The transportation funding is provided by the STARS system. The STARS system takes into account the following factors:

- Land area of the district.
- Average distance that students ride on buses.
- The number of destinations.
- The ridership count, both basic education and special education students.
- Additional factors for non-high districts, districts in a transportation co-op, and others.

Districts receive their transportation allocation monthly, based on the same schedule as general apportionment money.

Transportation Vehicle Funding

The Legislature also provides a separate funding stream for the purchase of buses. This funding can only be used for the purchase of yellow buses, major repairs of yellow buses with OSPI approval, or debt service payments relating to the purchase of yellow buses.

OSPI has an inventory of all school buses owned by each district (using data the districts provide to OSPI). Buses that are within a certain age range qualify for a depreciation payment from OSPI, intended to fund the purchase of an eventual replacement. The larger school buses trigger depreciation payments for 13 years, and the shorter buses are depreciated over 8 years. Once a bus ages out of that schedule, no additional depreciation payments are made.

Districts receive this funding once a year as a part of their August apportionment. This means that the money comes in at the end of a given fiscal year, just before the start of a new school year.



From The Desk of a United States Senate Legislative Intern

by Logan Endres, Strategic Advocacy Coordinator

From June to August, I had the opportunity to serve as a legislative intern for United States Senator Patty Murray.

Working for the assistant majority leader of the Senate was truly an exhilarating experience. I used my time to build a foundational knowledge of how the federal government works, create strong relationships, and dive deeper into important issues that will make a difference for so many people in our country.

In addition to education policy, I was also able to work on issues such as climate/environmental policy and immigration policy. While I learned so many things from the internship, my top takeaways from my legislative intern experience are as follows:

1. Working **together** is important, and it **matters.**
2. **Every voice** is heard.
3. With **hard work** comes great **reward.**
4. **Say yes.**
5. **It's okay** if you don't know the answer.

I believe each of the takeaways above can relate to your role as a school director, and I hope you will reflect on them in that light.

I wholeheartedly believe that each and every Washington school board member shows up to work together to support every student, teacher, and family. More than ever, the past year has shown that education can be hard work, but you continue to show up and say yes to bearing your responsibility because it matters.

I'd be happy to expand on this and share more about how my experience will inform my work for WSSDA, so please don't hesitate to give me a call.

Logan is a fierce advocate for education policy who also serves as WSSDA's Strategic Advocacy Coordinator. He found his way to an internship with Senator Murray through his studies at Arizona State University where he is working to earn his degree in Public Policy & Public Service.





Growing a network

Recognition is growing for the importance of authentic student voice on local school boards and within WSSDA. That's why the WSSDA Board of Directors created the Student Representative Network, an officially recognized network within WSSDA to connect student school board representatives to the myriad of issues and topics related to K-12 public education in Washington state.

The network will support and connects student school board representatives and foster their growth as leaders. We're excited to develop the opportunities and avenues for student school board representatives to share their perspectives, express their views, and engage more fully in education policy at all levels.

The first meeting is scheduled to convene in the fall of 2021. The network will start by working on projects such as creating resources for student representatives, getting organized for student advocacy and testimony during the legislative session, and more. To get your student board representatives connected, please email WSSDA Strategic Advocacy Coordinator Logan Endres at l.endres@wssda.org.

This year, students focused *Inspire Week* on saying thank you to high school staff

Now in its third year, *Inspire Week* at Prairie High School has become a popular event for students and staff. This year, however, the event took a bit of a different approach.

Originally started in 2019 by the Crimson Crew, *Inspire Week* is now part of a brand new class at Prairie known as Applied Psychology, led by social studies teacher Dawn Rowe. "It's part of the curriculum now, so I don't have to try and figure out how to make *Inspire Week* work," Rowe said. "Now the kids can all do it. They come up with all the ideas, and then they do it, and I just coach them along the way."

In a normal year, *Inspire Week* is focused on students uplifting other students. This year, they turned the focus on saying thank you to the high school's staff because they've done so much work in an incredibly difficult year, Rowe said.

Some students greeted staff at the door, others plastered encouraging sticky notes to bathroom mirrors or hearts on doors (what they've dubbed a "heart attack"), and some headed outside with sidewalk chalk to write messages of positivity. Others created cards and gifts to give to counselors, secretaries, security workers and people doing attestation before school.

In the cafeteria, a giant banner says "thank you" to nutrition support staff who've made extra meals, including during school breaks and over the summer. Another is for custodial staff who've worked extra hard to clean and sanitize the school throughout the year, especially

after students returned to buildings. Other students have taken on the role of "secret pal" for staff members, leaving them encouraging messages. Students also created a video for staff that is filled with messages of support from students all over the school.

Inside the building, senior Hannah Hollenbeak poses under the banner she created. It reads, "It always seems impossible until it's done." Outside, junior Lily Wilder finishes a giant chalk drawing congratulating the graduating class of 2021. On Thursday, another student brought dozens of flowers from her own garden to be handed out to teachers in their classrooms. Others passed out watermelons or Subway gift cards to counselors and other staff members throughout the week.

The ideas all came from the students themselves, Rowe said, with each period creating a schedule of things to do. "Leaders pop up and creativity pops up and I just help organize it and make sure it all gets done," she said. "I feel like if you give them ownership, they can do it."

Or, as a paper heart on one door puts it, "YOU are capable of amazing things."



“... *Inspire Week* is focused on students uplifting other students. This year, they turned the focus on saying thank you to the high school's staff because they've done so much work in an incredibly difficult year.”



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



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direct

QUARTERLY NEWSMAGAZINE

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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