



Professional & Legal Services

A Member Benefit

Association of Washington
School Principals

National Association of Elementary
School Principals

National Association of Secondary
School Principals





AWSP Code of Ethics

An educational administrator's professional behavior must conform to an ethical code. The code is idealistic and at the same time practical so that it can apply reasonably to all educational administrators. The administrator acknowledges that the schools belong to the public they serve for the purpose of providing educational opportunities to all. However, the administrator assumes responsibility for providing professional leadership in the school and community. This responsibility requires the administrator to maintain standards of exemplary professional conduct. It must be recognized that the administrator's actions will be viewed and appraised by the community, professional associates and students. To these ends, the administrator subscribes to the following statements of standards. The educational administrator:

- Makes the well-being of students the fundamental value in all decision-making and actions.
- Fulfills professional responsibilities with honesty and integrity.
- Supports the principle of due process and protects the civil and human rights of all individuals.
- Obeys local, state and national laws and does not knowingly join or support organizations that advocate, directly or indirectly, the overthrow of the government.
- Implements the governing board of education's policies and administrative rules and regulations.
- Pursues appropriate measures to correct those laws, policies, and regulations that are not consistent with sound educational goals.
- Avoids using positions for personal gain through political, social, religious, economic or other influence.
- Accepts academic degrees or professional certification only from duly accredited institutions.
- Maintains the standards and seeks to improve the effectiveness of the profession through research and continuing professional development.
- Honors all contracts until fulfillment or release.

AWSP Mission Statement

The mission of the Association of Washington School Principals is to support principals and the principalship in the education of all students.

Professional & Legal Services

A Benefit for Members of AWSP

There may come a time in your career when you need professional advice or legal counsel because of a job-related action. Members of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) can obtain professional advice or help in obtaining legal services by calling the Association office at 800.562.6100.

An AWSP staff member will respond promptly in a confidential manner. These services are provided by AWSP under the guidelines and limits established by the AWSP Board. These services are coordinated by the executive director and the Professional Responsibilities and Rights (PR&R) Commission, a group of members who annually and anonymously review cases.

Know Your Responsibilities

AWSP intentionally placed “responsibilities” before “rights” when it established the PR&R Commission. We encourage our members to place priority on fulfilling the responsibilities of their positions and following the professional Code of Ethics as established by the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP) and the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and adopted by AWSP.

Be Informed

As a professional, you should know:

- Your job description and evaluation procedures required by law or adopted in district policies.
- Legal requirements of your position.
- Other conditions of your employment as established by law or district policies.
- Bargaining agreements that govern employees within the school district.
- Proper channels of communication within your district.
- Procedures for dealing with disagreements including grievance procedures for employees.
- Procedures for seeking AWSP assistance.
- Washington state’s Code of Professional Conduct for Education Practitioners.

What Services Does AWSP Provide?

It is the goal of AWSP to support each member's responsibilities and rights in the fulfillment of the role of principal or assistant principal within expected district, state and professional standards. Assistance may be informal or formal depending on the member's requests and/or needs. In all situations, AWSP's involvement will be professional, confidential and respectful of all parties. AWSP provides the following assistance:

- Counseling on job-related issues, backed by the experience and resources of AWSP's professional staff.
- Analysis of written and verbal communications and facts related to the problem.
- Mediation with the parties involved.
- Recommendations and review of an improvement plan.
- Assistance in selecting a third-party fact finder.
- Assistance in obtaining legal counsel with experience in school-related issues.

Who is Eligible for Assistance?

All AWSP members (active, associate, emeritus, or intern) are eligible for professional advice and counsel from AWSP executive staff. Assistance in obtaining legal counsel is available only to active members. There is a 60-day waiting period after enrollment in AWSP before assistance in obtaining legal services can be provided. No member will be eligible for assistance in obtaining legal services for situations that existed prior to the effective date of active membership. The decision of the PR&R Commission will be final in any dispute over eligibility.

Member Comments

"I would like to extend my sincere thanks for your kind help, encouragement, professional guidance and immediate availability during these last few months."

"Thank you for your support. I truly appreciate your time and concern for me as a professional."

AWSP Legal Assistance Program

AWSP provides professional and legal assistance based on the following schedule:

- **Level 1: Staff Consultation**–AWSP executive staff members provide confidential, professional consultation at no charge to members.
- **Level 2: Initial Attorney Consultation**–The executive director or an executive staff member may authorize up to \$500 for an initial consultation between a member and an attorney designated by AWSP. Financial support for consultation with an attorney personally selected by members is only available with prior approval of AWSP staff. AWSP will not reimburse an attorney for services rendered prior to approval.
- **Level 3: Legal Fee Reimbursement Programs**–When a member’s position or benefits are threatened or there is the prospect of civil liability from a job-related action, AWSP will assist members in submitting the appropriate application forms for legal services and benefits to their respective national association (NAESP or NASSP). Through national association affiliate membership, financial support is available to active members for reimbursement of attorney fees, following a \$500 deductible, up to the program limit (\$10,000) depending on years of continuous membership. An initial \$500 payment by AWSP to an attorney satisfies the required deductible for both national legal fee reimbursement programs.
- **Level 4: Ongoing Case Support**–AWSP executive staff remain available for personalized professional counsel to members as needed for analysis of written and verbal communications, review and recommendations for improvement plans and mediation with the parties involved.
- **Level 5: Exceptional Case Support**–Exceptional cases impacting all principals/assistant principals may be eligible for additional legal fee reimbursement beyond a member’s national association coverage after all other options have been explored. Members may request a hearing by the PR&R Commission for special consideration of exceptional case support.

NAESP/NASSP Legal Assistance Programs

Both NAESP and NASSP offer similar financial assistance programs for legal services when a member's position is threatened or there is the prospect of legal action from a job-related situation. Assistance is not normally provided in criminal actions. Special circumstances are reviewed on a case-by-case basis.

To be eligible, you must have been a member of the national affiliate when the cause of a legal action occurred. AWSP executive staff will assist members in notification to the appropriate national affiliate as soon as notice of legal action is perceived. For each year of uninterrupted membership, you are eligible for \$1,000 in defense reimbursement (to the limit of \$10,000), subject to a \$500 deductible. Following a claims determination process, reimbursement for legal expenses will be paid by the appropriate national association directly according to specific terms governing their insurance policies.

Professional Liability Coverage

Lawsuits are more frequently brought against principals and assistant principals for an event arising out of his/her educational duties. NASSP and NAESP members have a safeguard to help protect their assets through \$1,000,000 in professional liability insurance programs. This coverage is provided at no extra charge and is part of the regular AWSP/national component dues. With professional liability insurance coverage, you are protected against a broad range of exposures you face every day, such as injury to students under your supervision, failure to educate, violation of student civil rights or improper placement of students. Detailed information describing the NAESP and NASSP Legal Assistance Programs are available on each organization's Web site (www.naesp.org or www.principals.org).

Member Comments

"I have always been a great proponent of the AWSP office and the services they offer to members. However, after this past year I will sing their praises to any and all who will listen."

"Your wise thoughts and experienced advice made a world of difference for me and my professional future."

Legal References

The following legal references are provided for individual use and research. The complete text of the current statutes may be found on the Washington State Legislature's Web site: <http://www1.leg.wa.gov/LawsAndAgencyRules>.

If you would like AWSP to send you a copy of a statute, please call 800.562.6100.

RCW 28A.405.100–Evaluation/Probation Statute

RCW 28A.405.210–Nonrenewal Statute

RCW 28A.405.220–Provisional Employee Statute

RCW 28A.405.230–Transfer to Subordinate Position

RCW 28A.405.300–Adverse Effect Discharge Statute

RCW 28A.405.310–Hearings Statute

WAC 180-87–Acts of Unprofessional Conduct

Rules of the Road

1. Call/refer early, even when the situation is not clear. Early professional advice can save time, money and careers.
2. Don't assume the central office or superintendent understands the good work you do.
3. Develop your own public relations plan for different audiences (i.e., parents, teachers, staff).
4. Prepare highlights/accomplishments to send to your supervisor as part of the evaluation process.
5. If inaccurate information is included in letters or evaluations, respond with a letter that "gives the facts."
6. Use climate surveys to your advantage! Run your own survey every two or three years using broad-based survey or accreditation instruments.
7. If there are legitimate performance/evaluation concerns, address them with specific improvement plans.
8. Keep notes/timeline on district meetings and actions that impact your career.
9. If you are not feeling good about the job or your performance, consider alternatives.
10. Keep your professional files current.



Association of Washington School Principals
1021 8th Avenue S.E.
Olympia, WA 98501-1500
Office: 800-562-6100 • Fax: 360-357-7966
www.awsp.org



Printed on recycled paper
(07.07)