

*Washington Association of Student Councils*  
**Student Leadership in High Performing Schools**  
Program Direction

The age of standards is upon us. Our leadership programs can no longer focus on proms, pep assemblies and posters. Indeed, these are integral parts of the leadership program, but our focus must no longer be the event itself, but how the event will promote student success. Programs throughout the nation are being dismantled to make room for remediation and core academic classes. We must be able to articulate the necessity of our programs to the larger good of the student body and thus student success.

To better meet the needs of Washington's high schools and to continue to build validity and credibility for our schools' student leadership programs, we have created a program designed to:

- ❑ outline our beliefs and values as an organization,
- ❑ award recognition to exemplary programs,
- ❑ provide training and support to those programs that wish to improve their effectiveness.

With these needs in mind, the new WASC will help schools articulate the critical role necessity and purpose in promoting student learning. WASC Board members took the first step by creating a **statewide definition** of a student leader that is relevant for today's schools.

***Student leaders strive to nurture and empower all students to make a difference in their schools, communities and world. A student leader displays integrity, cooperation and respect toward self and others.***

With this definition guiding the way, our new program changes create a way to improve student leadership throughout the state while providing opportunities for recognition and reward. Opportunities provided through these changes include:

#### **Shift from Interhighs to Local Associations**

Interhighs (or school grouped together to train, network, collaborate and create programs) will now be called **Local Associations**. Similar to the current structure, groups of schools can determine the parameters of their grouping and the requirements to be a part of this association. In order to alleviate confusion, the name has been changed to be congruent with the National Association of Student Councils, and Washington Association of Student Councils. What was once called, for instance, the Greater Spokane Interhigh will now be called the Greater Spokane Association of Student Councils.

#### **Expanded View of Student Leadership**

Student Councils are no longer limited in scope to the traditional vision of student councils. Each school can select the leadership team that best represents the students of that particular school. The goal of a school leadership team is to improve the school environment, climate and student learning.

#### **Recognition and Added Benefits**

In the past, interhighs (now Local Associations) received no recognition for supporting their local schools. Now, Local Associations will be rewarded for creating a system to improve student learning in their association. With this recognition are additional benefits, based on the level of achievement. Member schools will also be recognized for excellence in student leadership. Schools will be awarded a council distinction, making them eligible for benefits and recognition.

#### **Adult Advocate for Local Associations**

We will ask that local associations have adult guidance. These adults will assist with communication between the local association and the state, as well as to assist the local association with meeting its goals.

