

WashingtonPrincipal

Association of Washington School Principals

FALL 2017

2017
WASHINGTON STATE
PRINCIPALS
OF THE YEAR



ELEMENTARY
ADINA BRITO

Evergreen Elementary
Shelton SD



MIDDLE LEVEL
DOUG KAPLICKY

East Valley Middle School
East Valley SD



HIGH SCHOOL
DAN BESETT

Wilson High School
Tacoma PS

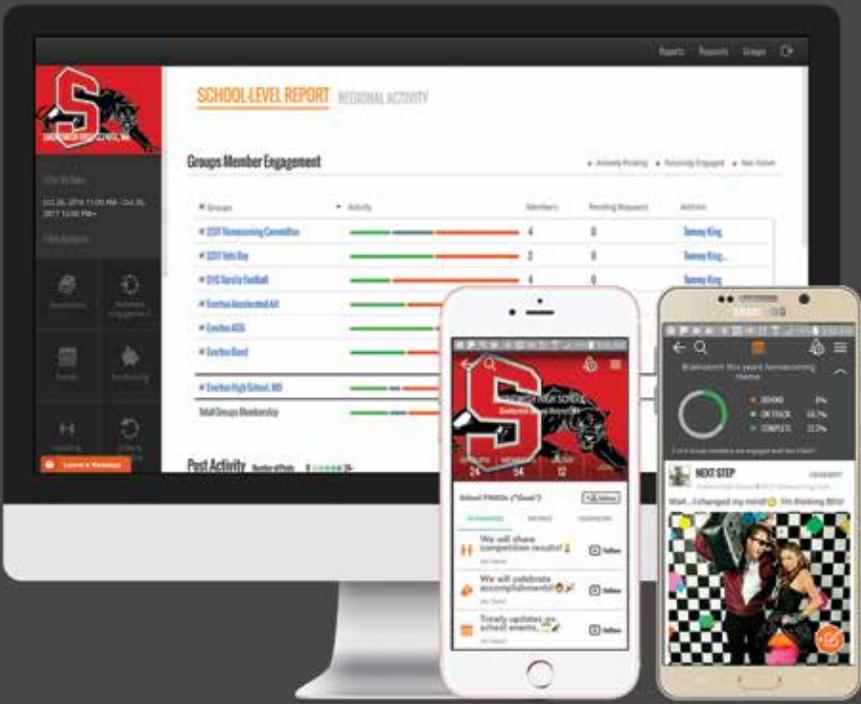
ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

ESSA Plan Update | Be Your Own Advocate

Solving for X: The Problem with Algebra | The Great Principal Swap

Student Led Culture?

- Goals Orientation.
- Motivate Achievement.
- Increase Student Engagement.
- Data Informed Direction.
- More Effectivity, Lower Costs.



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- Reduce** Repayment and refinancing options may reduce monthly payments
- Redirect** Redirect any savings to help achieve financial goals

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Student loan refinancing is provided through an unaffiliated third-party financial services firm. Refinancing a federal student loan will make the borrower ineligible for loan forgiveness programs and could lengthen the repayment period of the loan. The borrower's overall repayment amount may be higher than the loans they are refinancing even if their monthly payments are lower.



COVER STORY

26

2017 WASHINGTON STATE PRINCIPALS OF THE YEAR



FEATURED CONTENT

- 10** **The Great Principal Swap**
Eric Johnson
- 13** **Why are Adults the Worst Learners?**
Scott Seaman
- 15** **SROs: Connecting People, Creating Safer Schools**
TJ Rodriguez
- 17** **Know the Signs: Sandy Hook Tragedy Inspires Violence Prevention Program**
Nicole Hockley
- 20** **ESSA Plan Update**
Michaela Miller
- 23** **Using Data To Gauge Staff Readiness**
Brett Willie
- 30** **Solving for X: The Problem with Algebra**
Eric Diener
- 32** **Connecting Elementary and Secondary Principals: An Opportunity We are Missing**
Julie Perron
- 38** **Be Your Own Best Advocate**
Roz Thompson

IN EVERY ISSUE

- 6** **News Briefs**
- 8** **Appy Hour**
- 8** **Ask a Principal: What's the Best Part of Your Job?**
- 34** **Learning Centers** | Martin E. Fortin, Jr.
- 36** **Student Leadership** | Greg Barker
- 40** **Diversity** | Kurt Hatch
- 42** **Honor Roll** | Sue Anderson
- 46** **Humor Me!**

COLUMNS

- 4** **From the Editor's Desk** | David Morrill
- 5** **From the AWSP President** | Kelley Boyd
- 44** **From the AWSP Executive Director** | Gary Kipp

ON THE COVER

- 26** **Principals of the Year**

Cover photo: Adina Brito, Doug Kaplicky and Dan Besett, winners of the 2017 Washington Principal of the Year awards.
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National Association of Elementary School Principals
 National Association of Secondary School Principals

Changes & Constants

David Morrill

Communications Director

Every place I look, I see change. The colors on the leaves just changed, and now those trees shed their leaves for the changing season. Our political climate changed, and not for the better. My health insurance provider canceled the plan I was on, so there's a change I wasn't planning on making. As you all know, sometimes change is good, sometimes change is bad. Personally, the best change I've ever experienced happened in October when I married the woman of my dreams.

This December marks my fourth year at AWSP. Our executive staff leadership has gone through lots of change since I came on board. When I started, Don Rash ran the middle level programs, followed by Vicki Bates, and now Kurt Hatch is building on their incredible work. The same is true with Ron Sisson following Paula Quinn's footsteps. Roz Thompson has filled Jerry Bender's shoes as our Director of Government Relations. And of course, the biggest change of all will happen next September as we transition our association's leadership from Gary Kipp to Scott Seaman.

Soon, I'll be one of the longest tenured directors at AWSP. Scott started four months before I did, but it feels like we've been at AWSP forever. A common thread through each of these staff changes and transitions is we've found incredible people to follow in the footsteps of the amazing people before them, which is a testament to Gary's phenomenal leadership. Our association continues to grow, to push our boundaries of what we can achieve, both internally at our office and the impact we want to make at the state level. Despite the change, one thing has never wavered, and that's our commitment to you.

When I first started here, I noticed a sign in the office that read, "Members are not an interruption, they are the purpose of our work." That remains as true today as the day I started here. Our other North Star is our mission statement. We exist to support principals and the principalship in the education of all students. That's powerful and something we ask ourselves every day. Can we draw a through line in our work to supporting members, the profession, or the students they serve?

That's one constant I suspect will never change. ■



David Morrill is the AWSP Communications Director. He serves as Managing Editor for Washington Principal.

Expand Your Own Leadership

Kelley Boyd

Principal, Coulee City Elementary,
Coulee-Hartline School District

The great Vince Lombardi once said, “Leaders are made, they are not born. They are made by hard effort, which is the price which all of us must pay to achieve any goal that is worthwhile.”

While I completely agree with the famous football coach, research indicates some personality qualities might predispose some individuals to become leaders. This does not mean a leader is defined by having those qualities. I personally never dreamed I would become a leader of an elementary school when I went to Eastern Washington University at 18 years old to become an elementary teacher, and I certainly never thought I would become the president of an outstanding group of principals from across the state.

Nonetheless, here I am and I can say looking back my path to leadership started from a very young age.

My father might tell you that my journey started as the bossy five-year-old I may or may not have been, and I’m sure the path continued in his mind as he dealt with a know-it-all 13-year-old. Although in my opinion it started officially in high school through my participation in athletics, clubs, and student government. Belonging to a group always appealed to me, as it does for most teenagers, but the desire to lead the group was something that grew more and more through the years.

Memorable experiences such as attending the Cheer-Leadership camp in Ellensburg and participating in an ASB Leadership Retreat for small schools with our current AWSP

“ Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.”

— VINCE LOMBARDI

Director, Susan Fortin, and AWSP Learning Centers Director, Marty Fortin, launched my effort toward becoming a leader that has continued ever since. I actively worked towards leadership roles in my college days and in the first years in the classroom. Participating on committees and belonging to groups, I was eager to lead.

Now in the principal role and as an AWSP member, my effort toward leadership has shifted focus from wanting to lead, to wanting to be a better leader. I credit this shift to my experience on the ESPAW/AWSP boards. Because of my involvement I have been able to analyze my leadership style and refine my skills to the betterment of my school community. I also have been able to become a spokesperson for fellow colleagues.

Through AWSP I was able to meet with Gov. Inslee and five other principals and advocate for a change in the principal Pro-Cert requirement. I’m proud AWSP had a strong influence on the ultimate outcome of the Pro-Cert elimination. All of this is to say to you, my fellow leaders, is that if you find yourselves in a



position to expand your participation in AWSP through committee work or perhaps serving on a component board, I highly encourage you. That decision could expand your own leadership journey as it has mine.

Vince Lombardi also said, “Individual commitment to a group effort — that is what makes a team work, a company work, a society work, a civilization work.” I hope when the time is right for you, you consider deepening your AWSP commitment. ■



Kelley Boyd is principal of Coulee City Elementary and is serving as AWSP president for the 2017-18 school year.

Gary Kipp Will Give the AWSP Keys to Scott Seaman

Gary Kipp, our executive director, will be retiring in August 2018. Gary has served as AWSP's executive director since September of 2003. We'll miss his leadership, generosity, humor, and genuine kindness.



Scott Seaman

So what's our transition plan? Who's got the impossible job of replacing a legend? At our September board meeting, the AWSP Board offered the position to Scott Seaman. (You may recognize him from the "AWSP News" desk!) He interviewed for the position in August, but the experience that makes him the perfect replacement has been growing for some time.

Scott is in the final year of UW's Leadership for Learning (L4L) doctoral program. Gary and Jason Leahy, executive director of the Illinois Principal Association, served as official mentors for Scott as he's gone through the program. His many years of leading Tumwater High School, the four years he's spent with us here at AWSP, and his mentoring and new learnings from L4L have prepared him for his upcoming role.



"Fast Five" Videos for Quick Leadership Tips

AWSP released new "Fast Five" videos, with principals sharing five quick tips, tricks, ideas, or resources in five minutes or less:

- Getting Seniors Started Right with a 5th Year Plan | *Brent Osborn*
- Dealing with Difficult Parents | *Ken Schutz*
- Increasing Graduation Rates | *Lori Wyborney*
- Building Positive Student Relationships | *Aaron Fletcher*
- Tech Tips | *Scott Friedman*
- Middle School Transitions | *Kirsten Rue*
- Middle School Transitions | *Cindy Cromwell*

Subscribe to our YouTube Channel (go to www.youtube.com and search for "AWSP") so you don't miss a single video!

Welcome, Emily!



Emily Tate

AWSP is excited to welcome the newest member of our staff, Emily Tate! Emily joins our team as an administrative assistant.

She graduated from Timberline High School and earned her associates at South Puget Sound Community College. She plans to transfer to a university to earn a degree. In her free time, Emily enjoys spending time with her fiancé Kole, going to sporting events, traveling, and shopping. Send Emily a "Welcome!" email at emily@awsp.org.



AWSP's Washington Principal Magazine Wins an Award

That's right – the very magazine that you hold in your hand at this minute is an award-winning publication! In June, *Washington Principal* won an Excellence award from the National School Public Relations Association. Thank you to all our members whose contributions help make this publication a success!

AWSP Office Closure in December

With the winter holidays fast approaching, we wanted to take this opportunity to let our members know that the AWSP office will be closed Dec. 18 – Jan. 2. Watch for an email with additional details this winter!



Jerry Bender



Sue Anderson

AWSP President's Award Goes to Jerry Bender and Sue Anderson

Congratulations to Jerry Bender and Sue Anderson, the recipients of AWSP's 2017 President's Award! Jerry Bender is AWSP's former director of governmental relations, who retired in July of 2017. Sue Anderson is the educator effectiveness office director at OSPI. Both were chosen for the award because of their commitment and support of AWSP and principals across the state. Recipients are chosen by the AWSP Board in consultation with the AWSP executive director. The award is presented at the association's annual conference in June.



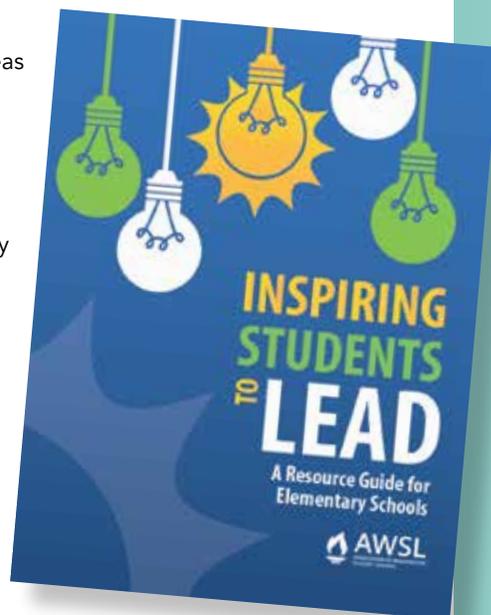
We Saw the Sign...

If you've been by the AWSP office in Olympia lately, you may have noticed our new signage. With the recent rebranding of our association, it was time to update our building with some new and improved signs to help welcome visitors. Check them out next time you're in town!

AWSL Launches a New Elementary Curriculum: *Inspiring Students to Lead*

AWSL's new *Inspiring Students to Lead* publication has workshops, program models and classroom lessons for imparting basic leadership skills to elementary students.

We know that by giving elementary students skills and experiences in the areas of communication, group process, organization, human relations and self-awareness they'll develop the confidence to lead. Their skills transfer to every school they will attend and your kids will become partners in creating a culture, ensuring safety, closing the gap and engaging the community. Visit www.AWSLeaders.org to order.



APPY HOUR

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How Readable Is Your Writing?

These days, everyone is extremely busy. When your writing needs to grab someone's attention quickly, Readable.io can help. Readable.io lets you upload



any text you like – from Word docs to websites – and score it for readability. (This includes grade-level scoring, sentiment, keyword density, and even typical reading and speaking times for your text.) It also identifies overly long sentences, clichés and instances of passive voice, and highlights them for you to work on.

Here at AWSP we've built a readability score into our own office style guide. Our goal is to keep written materials at about grade 12 or below, preferably in the grade 8-to-10 range. (This is not because our members read at this level, but because we want to be sensitive to our readers' time!) In terms of reading ease, we shoot for 45 to 60. (By the way, this "Appy Hour" article is written at grade level 8.6.)

Research shows that when it comes to business communications (as opposed to, say, a novel or a play), all audiences prefer simpler writing. No matter whether it is a reader with a Ph.D. or a high school education, people prefer easier reading materials. Let Readable.io help you reach your audience.

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ASK A PRINCIPAL



We asked our members to tell us about the best day they've ever had as a principal or assistant principal.

Here are some of the great responses we received:

“ The best day of being a principal is when I get to make positive phone calls home to families!”

Kelli DeMonte

*Principal, Jefferson Lincoln Elementary,
Centralia SD*



“ The best day I have ever had as a principal occurred when, unbeknownst to me, a 30+ year veteran kindergarten teacher called a child up during an assembly with a piece of poster board to say thanks for being the best principal she's ever had the pleasure of serving students with!”

Thomas Jay

Superintendent/Principal, Skykomish SD

“ A teacher told me that her husband noticed she was now coming home with a smile this year. She told him that she has a principal that is super understanding and supportive, who visits every classroom every day.”

Kathleen Delpino

Principal, Lydia Hawk Elementary, North Thurston PS



“ My best day ever as a principal came after my worst day ever as a principal. One of our students was killed in the Cascade Mall shooting last year. That was the worst day ever as a principal. On Monday when I returned to school, I watched with pride as our students led the process of healing as a school community. I am lucky to work with amazing students, families, and staff at Mount Vernon High School. #WeAreMV”

Rod Merrell

Principal, Mount Vernon High, Mount Vernon SD

“ This is a great job — but the best day(s) are the ones when we let our hair down for a minute and have some fun.”
(Video at [youtube.com/watch?v=dXmqWRHxEpc](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dXmqWRHxEpc))

Matt Kesler

Chief Umtuch Middle, Battle Ground PS

“ When I returned to a previous district and saw an eighth-grade student. He said to me, in front of all his friends, that I was the best principal he had ever had and thanked me for all the help I had given him while he was struggling in elementary school. Made my career!”

Jeff Cravy

South Whidbey Elementary, South Whidbey SD

“ I honestly could never choose one day, but here’s a fun one! I see students and families all the time in stores and in the community. I usually get hugs, waves, or the look of shock that I’m not at school. Well this weekend I saw two kids from my school at Safeway. I snuck up on them and tapped them on the back and said ‘hi’ quickly. They both looked shocked that I was at the store. As I was heading towards the other end of the store, one of them yelled out loudly and from across the store, ‘Mrs. Hollinger, you’re famous!’ Everyone looked up. I gave a bow and then headed off to grab my items. Moments like this are the best with kids! Love my job.”

Stephanie Hollinger

Principal, Evergreen Forest Elementary, North Thurston PS

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changing the world™

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The Great **PRINCIPAL SWAP** *at Lynnwood High School*

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Managing Resources



Eric Johnson
KOMO TV Seattle

Editor's Note: "Eric's Heroes" is a weekly series airing every Wednesday on Seattle's KOMO News in the 6 p.m. newscast. If you have a good story about a good person doing good things for the right reasons, share it with Eric by sending an email to heroes@komonews.com. We thank Eric and KOMO TV for sharing their story with us.



Change is hard. It is also inevitable. But consider the dilemma that faced Lynnwood High School.

I want to take you back to last June. It was the end of the school year.

And there was Dave Golden, strolling through the commons area at lunchtime. The place was bustling with students wolfing down their food, talking, engaging in the usual horseplay and hijinks that makes the high school years stick with us for a lifetime.

The students know him as “Mr.” Golden. He has a shaved head and round glasses and he wears a suit and tie. He walks among the students with an ease that makes you realize he’s been doing this for a long, long time.

He stops at one table and points to our camera. “They’re doing a story here...” and the students all say, “Ahhhh.” And as Mr. Golden walks away, one girl pipes up with, “We love Mr. Golden. He does great things here!”

He is the principal at Lynnwood High, and has been for 17 years. And before that, he worked at a bunch of other schools. He’s a career educator, a man who’s dedicated his life to our youth and better preparing them to inherit our world.

He’s sitting at his desk, a big room with a big window. He’s reading his final entry of the year for the school newsletter.

“There have been a few thousand happy, sad, crazy, quiet, outrageous, studious, spirited students who have

shared their teenage years with me and I have loved every minute of it,” he says.

When he finishes he breaks into a big smile.

There is a bunch of seniors in line to sign up for something having to do



WHO'S THE BOSS? Lynnwood High's Dave Golden (L) and Mike Piper make the move.

with graduation. Mr. Golden cruises by and notices that something isn't right. He says to one of the kids in line: “What are you doing? Yeah you. Come here, Albert.” He’s smiling as he says it.

The students in line watch on.

“You’re not a senior,” he says to Albert. “You’re not even CLOSE to being a senior!”

“The first person I said something to was my wife. I said, ‘Honey, what do you think about this?’ She said, ‘That’s an interesting idea and kind of cool.’”

All the other students erupt with a chorus of, “Whoaaaahhh!” and Albert slinks away. It doesn't take long to figure out that Dave Golden was born for this job.

'THAT'S AN INTERESTING IDEA'

But there was a problem at Lynnwood High. Well, perhaps not a problem so much as a “situation.” There was a younger man at the school, a guy named Mike Piper. He was the assistant principal.

“This is the end of my fourth year as assistant principal,” he says. “I was in the district for 10 years teaching at a middle school close by. I started my internship into administration here.” Everyone knew that one day Mike Piper would be a principal, too. He was a

rising star in the business, a guy who had the right stuff. You didn't have to be a genius to figure out that other schools would come knocking. Soon, somebody was going to steal Mike Piper away, and it was going to be a big loss for Lynnwood High.

“I knew that Piper would be getting a job offer sometime in the year, or the following year,” said Dave Golden.

Mike Piper agreed. “I knew that I was at that point where I was going to become a principal somewhere.”

So Mr. Golden got to thinking. He wasn't ready to retire. He loved the school too much and still felt he had a lot to offer. Still... there had to be an answer. And then, Mr. Golden hatched a masterful plan.

Continued on page 12

“The first person I said something to was my wife. I said, ‘Honey, what do you think about this?’ She said, ‘That’s an interesting idea and kind of cool.’”

Then he spoke to some students. And the Superintendent. And a bunch of teachers.

Only then did he speak to Mike Piper.

Mike smiles, a bit shyly, as he remembers their conversation.

“I was caught off guard because he said, ‘I want to talk to you’, and he closed the door and I thought it might be something really big. And it took me a while to get what he was talking about.”

A WAY TO SECURE THE SCHOOLS’ FUTURE

The idea was very simple, and, when you think about it, wildly humble.

Mr. Golden wanted to trade jobs with Mr. Piper! The principal would become the assistant principal. The assistant principal would become the principal.



Lynnwood High’s principal swap was a creative solution that benefited everyone.

Dave Golden remembers. “He said, ‘Oh come on now, you don’t want to do that, you are principal of the school and you’ve been principal as long as I’ve been here...’”

But there was no escaping the fact that the idea was genius. Lynnwood High would keep its future, and the

future would keep learning from the past.

Mike Piper didn’t take a lot of convincing. “To know that I would get to stay here, a place that I love, was a great feeling.”

When I asked him if the whole thing was a surprise, he didn’t hesitate. “It doesn’t surprise me at all. Because Dave has never been a man of ego, he’s never been, ‘I’m the boss’, and that’s never been his reason for doing this. He’s always been guided by what’s right.”



“I’m proud of Lynnwood High School, That’s where my pride comes from.”

Mike Piper likes and respects Dave Golden. Seems like everybody does.

As perfect as the plan seemed, there were some realities about the present. I asked Mr. Golden if he was going to take a pay cut.

He said, “Yeah. Yep. For sure, because I’m not the principal anymore. Yeah, there will be a pay cut involved.”

And so there it was. There would be cost involved with doing the right thing.

SCHOOL COMES FULL CIRCLE

A month later we visited Lynnwood High again. And there was Mr. Golden

with a box in his arms, leaving his spacious office with the big window. He took it through the commons area and up some stairs to a smaller office with no outside windows. He plopped the box down.

“I’ve got my assistant helping me,” he said. “My temporary assistant, soon-to-be-boss.”

And, there was Mike Piper, carrying his own box into his new digs, the big office next to the main office, with a giant window looking out to the parking lot and the grass beyond it. Looking around he said, “My biggest resource will be Dave.”

And so, we’ve come full circle. It’s September, the first part of a new school year. Everyone’s coming to terms with The Great Lynnwood Principal Swap, marveling at the very idea of it.

Steve Miranda, the Dean of Students

shakes his head. “I’ve never heard of this. I’ve never heard of it in business or in schools or anything else. It’s amazing.”

The students gather at lunchtime this year just as they did last year. The way they always have. They wolf down their food and engage in the usual horseplay and hijinks.

Mike Piper, the new principal, sits at his new desk. “I would say there’s a healthy amount of fear and nervousness about it. So I don’t feel like I’ve got it all figured out. I’m hoping for growing and learning...”

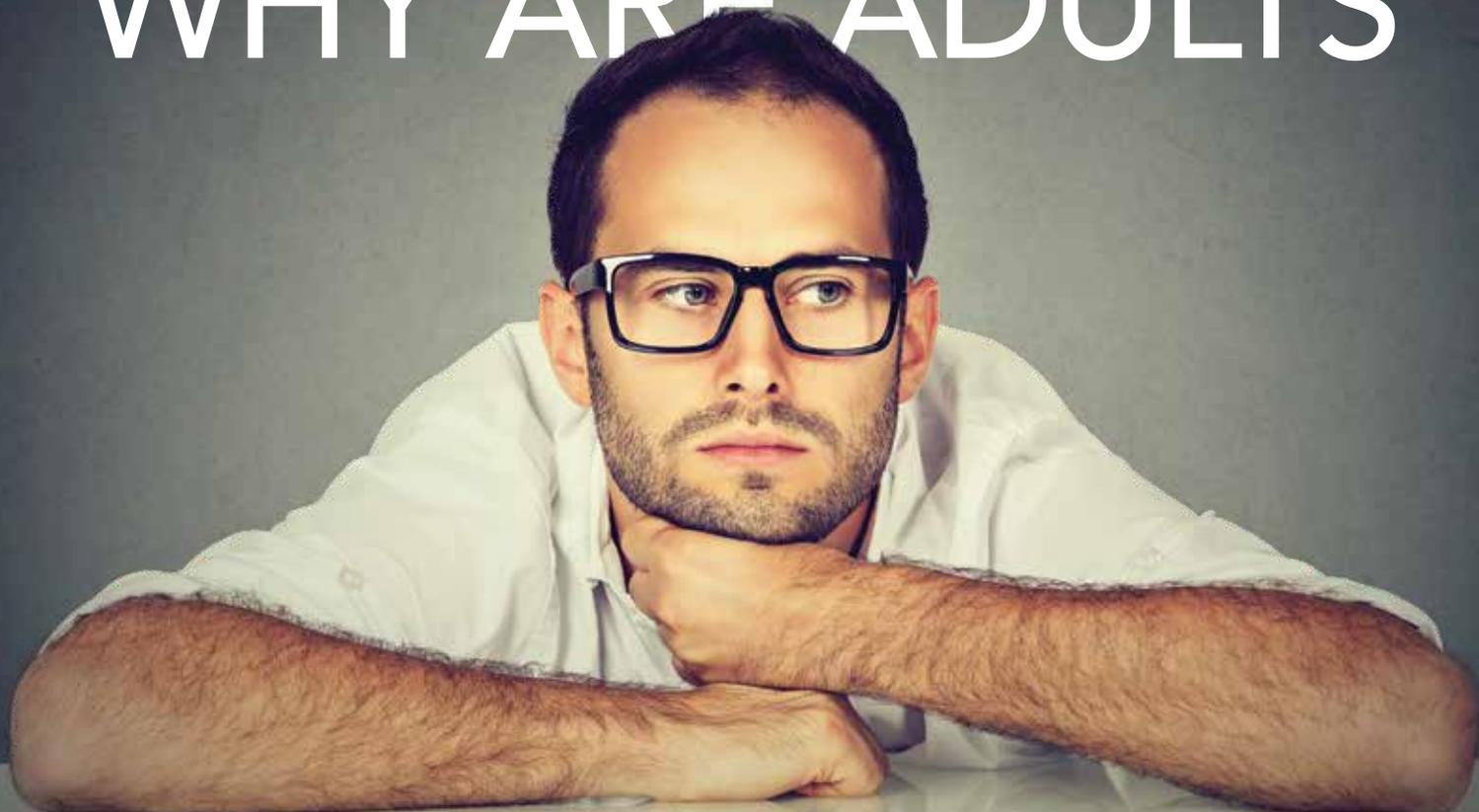
The new assistant principal is settling in, too.

I ask him if he’s proud of this thing he’s done. And, because he always knows the perfect thing to say, Mr. Golden offers this: “I’m proud that our team is still together. And the fact that I think we’re going to do a great job together. That’s where the real pride comes in.”

It’s modestly, of course, but not false modesty. Change is hard. It is also inevitable. The great ones know that.

“I’m proud of Lynnwood High School,” he says. “That’s where my pride comes from.” ■

WHY ARE ADULTS



THE WORST LEARNERS?

Scott Seaman

AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction

We've all been there. We've all sat in professional learning settings where the audience is completely disengaged, clearing emails and/or surfing the web. In fact, we've all developed coping and exit strategies for painful adult learning settings.

And, you can't tell me you haven't faked an important phone call and walked out of some sort of profession learning setting.

Here's the big question: Why is that? How can educators in charge of inspiring the minds of our kids not put the same energy into inspiring each other? Why is it that adults are

the worst learners? Is it the fault of the presenter or the learner? How have we created this mindset over time that adult learning has to be teacher torture, painful sit-n-get, and death by PowerPoint?

“And, you can't tell me you haven't faked an important phone call and walked out of some sort of profession learning setting.”

Enough is enough. It's time to revolutionize adult learning. It's time to bring new energy, mindset and research-based strategies to

adult learning settings. And, this is crazy talk now, but, it's time to put the same energy we expect teachers to put into their classes into the professional learning that principals provide for teachers, principals provide for each other, and central office leaders provide for principals. We need to put greater emphasis into planning and leading powerful adult learning for each other if we ever expect to impact student learning.

TIME TO ENGAGE

So, where do you start? Begin with reflection. Who were some of your favorite teachers you had as a student? Who are some of your favorite teachers you observe now? What presenters have you

seen recently that keep an entire room engaged? What is it about these teachers that makes them so effective? High energy, enthusiasm, creativity, sense of humor, high expectations, unconditional love, quick transitions, and most importantly, less of you and more of them. These great leaders of adult learning tend to follow the simple 70-30 Rule of presenting. The audience is engaging with each other 70 percent of the time and only listening to the presenter 30 percent of the time.

You've got to be willing to let go. You provide the vision, structure, purpose, space, food and fun, then let them lead their own learning with each other. Let them wrestle with relevant problems of practice related to their contexts. Provide the gift of time to tackle these problems of practice with each other by developing and testing theories of action in a safe environment. Adults need time to engage with each other. They don't need time to sit and listen to someone reading words off the screen.

“ You've got to be willing to let go. You provide the vision, structure, purpose, space, food and fun, then let them lead their own learning with each other.”

AWSP THEORY OF ADULT LEARNING

Thanks to the insight and feedback from principals who serve on the AWSP Professional Learning Committee, we have developed the AWSP Theory of Adult Learning. These principles are now used exclusively in all of our workshops, conferences and seminars and serve as our expectations of all adults

(presenters and participants) who appear in our adult learning settings.

Learning happens when adults:

- Access expertise inside and outside of the group
- Participate in authentic activities with the group
- Practice with relevant Problems of Practice
- Engage (formally and informally) with colleagues
- Apply new learning to professional contexts
- Reflect on leadership and new learnings

We recommend that you adopt this Theory of Adult Learning for your own building. Set the tone for what adult learning will look and feel like in your school or district. Call out the fact that adults tend to be the worst learners and change that

mindset by changing how you lead learning yourself. Start by asking your audience of learners what they think the AWSP Theory of Adult Learning means for them as a learner and for you as the leader.

Finally, no one ever said that adult learning has to be boring and void of fun. We are no different than the kids we serve. We deserve to laugh and smile while we learn. We deserve games, music, celebrations, prizes and raffle drawings. Our work is important and crucial to the future success of all kids and it's your job to lead the professional learning for you and those around you.

How will you be remembered as an instructional leader? How will your learners describe the professional learning you lead? Will they sit up front or take a seat in the back corner by the door? ■

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SROS: CONNECTING PEOPLE, CREATING SAFER SCHOOLS

TJ Rodriguez

Chief, Steilacoom Department of Public Safety

In 2016, the Steilacoom Department of Public Safety had the opportunity to partner with the Steilacoom Historical School District to implement a School Resource Officer (SRO) program which benefits the students, the district, and the community.

“Smiles, high-fives, and relatability go a LONG way!”

Police-community relations in the U.S. is a frequently discussed topic, and public outcry over recent police actions have led to civil unrest and strained relations. While the Town of Steilacoom has enjoyed positive police-community relations, there was an opportunity to improve relations through the implementation of the SRO program.

MORE THAN A POLICE PRESENCE

The program aligned with the organizational goals of both organizations, and so it came to life. Now in its second academic year, the SDPS and the school district utilize the SRO in three roles: 1) as a problem solver and liaison to community resources, 2) as an educator for both faculty and students, and 3) as a safety expert and law enforcer. Both the police department and the school district

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Engaging Communities



SMILES AND HIGH FIVES: Student Resource Officers play a key role in keeping school communities safe.

recognize the purpose of the SRO is not simply to provide a police presence. The SRO is not a “one-trick pony,” but fosters confidence in interacting with authority figures, facilitates interventions working with administration and staff, formulates and provides training for staff, and provides the potential for very rapid and timely response if a critical incident occurs.

The Steilacoom Historical School District is geographically located next to Joint-Base Lewis McChord (JBLM) in the south Puget Sound region. The school district provides educational services to several communities due to its positive academic reputation, and its boundaries encompassing

parts of the City of DuPont and unincorporated Pierce County. The school district operates six schools: one high school, one middle school, and four elementary schools, which serve approximately 3,200 students. Three of the schools (two elementary schools and the high school) are located within Steilacoom, while the others are located in DuPont and on Anderson Island.

Before the SRO could fulfill the primary purpose of the position, the police department had to build bridges with the students, the staff, and the parents. We had to exemplify what Sir Robert Peel noted which was “...the historic tradition that the

Continued on page 16

police are the public and the public are the police.” We accomplished this by immersing ourselves in everyday school activities. Officers are frequently at the schools when the students arrive, conduct walk-throughs, read with primary school students, and generally demonstrate that officers are human beings. Smiles, high-fives, and relatability go a LONG way! We have become part of the schools’ “landscape,” and we stopped being “the police” and started being people who worked as police officers.



ASHIFT: Students now see SROs as people who happen to work as police officers.

BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

In speaking with the school principals, staff, and, most importantly, the students, the SRO program is working exceptionally well. The police department and the school district identified Steilacoom High School as a focal point for the SRO program to provide influence to both students and the community.

Our SRO began being approached by students who shared problems, fears, and information once the groundwork was laid. Our SRO has been able to coordinate with social workers, Child Protective Services (CPS), parents, and staff to resolve these issues. This culture change is not surprising or remarkable, but the ease of coordination of this shift is impressive. The SRO provides assistance with student welfare checks, the resolution of student-to-student issues such as bullying or disorderly behavior, and is a resource for the Community Truancy Board.

In addition to the “reactive” liaison duties, our SRO has built working relationships with student and parent groups (i.e. Art Club, Key Club, Watch D.O.G.S.) as well as community groups such as Kiwanis. In one instance, officers partnered with staff and Animal Control to capture a roosting bat from the entry of one of our schools and relocate it to a more suitable environment.

The SRO’s function in the problem-solving/liaison role complements the educator and safety/law enforcer roles. Our SRO provides training to students and staff on crime prevention, safety, and critical incident responses. We have received positive feedback from students, parents, and staff regarding these training sessions, and they have sparked conversation outside of the school environment. We have also tasked the SRO with assisting in the development of protocols and coordinating emergency response plans (in conjunction with other emergency responders) between our communities for handling the district’s various types of emergencies.

INCREASING COMFORT LEVELS

The SRO presents a visible safety enhancement at our schools, and students and staff have informed the police department and the school district that there is an increased sense of safety and security. Steilacoom High School is located directly adjacent to the Western State Hospital (the state’s largest mental institution), which houses numerous mentally ill patients. The school’s location has presented a security issue over the years as patients with grounds privileges, passes to visit the local communities as part of their therapy, or intentional escapes/walk-aways have entered the school or been on its property. However, since the implementation of the SRO program (and the subsequent focus on safety

and security), the comfort level of students and staff has increased.

Fortunately, the law enforcer aspect of the SRO program is the role used least by our SRO. The SRO doesn’t exist to arrest students and send them to the “big house” as was feared by some at the onset of this program. Certainly, the SRO deals with criminal activity from time to time, but the objective is to provide a safe environment for students and staff. When police are called to the school for criminal activity, we investigate and promptly resolve those cases. However, the majority of incidents occurring at schools are disciplinary in nature and the SRO stays out of the administration’s way in handling those situations.

“ Students welcome me as I walk through the hallways, and offer a hand for a high five.”

I regularly visit each of the schools in Steilacoom to make sure my perception of the police department’s relationship with our school district and its students isn’t skewed. What I found was what I expected to find: students not afraid or intimidated by police presence. Students welcome me as I walk through the hallways, and offer a hand for a high five. I know that SRO programs are not new, and I know that our SRO program can be improved.

I’m proud of the work our SRO has done and how our department has engaged the community through the SRO program. We—the police department and the school district—have worked collaboratively to use the implementation of our SRO program to strengthen relationships between students, staff, and the community. ■

Know The Signs:

SANDY HOOK TRAGEDY INSPIRES VIOLENCE PREVENTION PROGRAM



Nicole Hockley

*Co-Founder and
Managing Director,
Sandy Hook Promise*

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety,
Engaging Communities*

We were heartbroken to learn about the mass school shooting at Freeman High School in Rockford on Sept. 13. Our hearts and thoughts are with Rockford and the entire Washington state community, as we know all too well the anguish that this community feels today and in the days to come.

“I know that pain all too well because my six-year old son, Dylan, was killed in his first-grade classroom in the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting on Dec. 14, 2012.”

I know that pain all too well because my six-year old son, Dylan, was killed in his first-grade classroom in the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting on Dec. 14, 2012. Nineteen other students and six educators were

Continued on page 18



murdered alongside my beautiful butterfly — and ever since that day, I have dedicated my life to protecting children from gun violence through Sandy Hook Promise.

Since losing my son Dylan, I have learned how gun violence — and other acts of violence and victimization — can be prevented when we know what to look for and when we Know The Signs. Far too often after an act of youth violence, including the tragic shooting in Rockford, facts come out that friends suspected or knew something was going to happen, but didn't know what to do with the information. In fact, in 4 out of 5 acts of gun violence, the shooter told someone of their violent plans prior to the event. Additionally, 7 out of 10 people who die by suicide told someone of their plans or gave some type of warning or indication.

“Far too often after an act of youth violence, including the tragic shooting in Rockford, facts come out that friends suspected or knew something was going to happen, but didn't know what to do with the information.”

I want you to know that I know the tragedy in Rockford can make one feel helpless and like all hope is lost. But I need you to know that it is not. We must take this time to take real action to keep our children safe. Together, we can create change so that no

“We are focused on preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) BEFORE it happens by educating and mobilizing youth and adults on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals.”

other family or community has to experience the loss of a child to gun violence.

As you and your community begin to try to pick up the pieces after last month's tragedy in Rockford, my wish is that you can move forward with a sense of hope. We at Sandy Hook Promise are here to support you. We are focused on preventing gun violence (and other forms of violence and victimization) BEFORE it happens by educating and mobilizing youth and adults on mental health and wellness programs that identify, intervene and help at-risk individuals. Our intent is to honor all victims of gun violence by turning our tragedy into a moment of transformation.

We accomplish this through our no-cost, evidenced-based Know The Signs violence prevention programs. Our Know The Signs programs are easy to implement and train students, school staff, and administrators to recognize the warning signs and signals and to help someone who might be thinking of hurting themselves or others before it's too late. Gun violence is preventable if you know the signs.

We would like to offer you and your schools our free Know The Signs programs, which include:

- **Say Something:** Training for middle and high school students on how to recognize the signs, especially in social media, of an individual who may be a threat to themselves or others,

and say something to a trusted adult or report the threat via an Anonymous Reporting System. Say Something will benefit youth age 10+, educators, administrators and community based organization leaders as well as parents. By building a culture of “looking out for one another” and reporting possible threats of violence when someone sees, reads or hears something (especially within social media), entire communities will become safer and lives will be saved.

- **Signs of Suicide (SOS):** A training for students, school staff and parents about the warning signs of youth suicide and how to intervene before violence or self-



TO LEARN MORE about the Sandy Hook Promise and the “Know The Signs” program, visit sandyhookpromise.org or contact programs@sandyhookpromise.org.

harm occurs. This evidence-based suicide prevention programming benefits the entire community. Students and school staff learn critical and potentially life-saving skills, parents are encouraged to advocate for their children's health, and the community becomes more resilient overall.

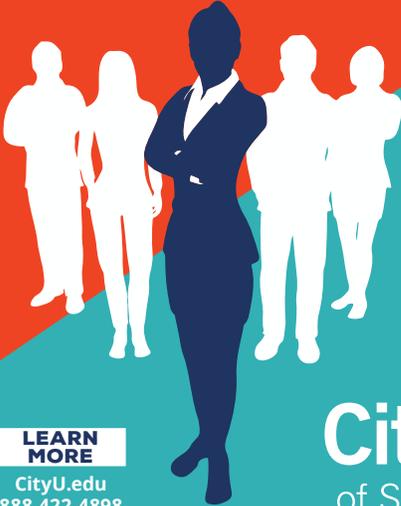
- **Start With Hello:** Teaches children and teens how to be more socially inclusive and connected to one another. Start With Hello benefits youth, faculty, administrators and community based organization leaders involved with the program by fostering a connected and inclusive community and reducing social isolation.
- **Safety Assessment & Intervention:** Evidenced-based training for school teams on how to identify, assess and respond to threatening behaviors before they escalate to violence. Benefits include: Reported violence reduction, decreased anxiety, increased knowledge in responding to threats, and reductions of 50% in long-term suspensions and bullying.

Each of our four Know The Signs programs is provided at no cost to schools. Please contact us at programs@sandyhookpromise.org if you would like to bring one of more of our programs to your school.

You can help prevent gun violence. We all can. Together we can help protect children from gun violence by supporting solutions that create safer, healthier homes, schools and communities. ■



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Washington's Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) Plan



Michaela W. Miller, Ed.D.
NBCT, Deputy Superintendent,
OSPI

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap



The 2015 federal Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) law provides Washington state and the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) a unique opportunity to take a deeper look at the challenges our students face and make systemic change, paving a pathway to success for all students. OSPI collaborated with hundreds of stakeholders to develop a plan that puts Washington students first. The fruit of that labor is the ESSA Consolidated Plan, which is guided by four main principles.

First, the plan emphasizes equity. Every student deserves the opportunity to finish school ready for

“Our plan focuses on breaking down the barriers that can stand in the way of success and supporting districts and schools focus on all student subgroups.”

post-secondary aspirations, career, and life. Our plan focuses on breaking down the barriers that can stand in the way of success and supporting districts and schools focus on all student subgroups.

Second, the plan focuses on facilitating an environment of continuous improvement for schools. In our new accountability index, we provide more indicators than ever before. This broadening of measures allows districts and schools to look at school quality as more than just

a student test score. It also provides an incentive to analyze data and find out where and which students are struggling. The data is designed to help districts and schools develop and implement plans that are unique to their schools.

Third, the plan aspires to have every school provide every student with a full support system and access to effective educators and school leadership. The plan outlines our strategy to attract and retain high-quality educators by developing

evidence-based professional development for teachers, principals, and other school leaders.

Fourth, the plan makes it easier for districts to innovate and support their students. Providing flexibility for schools and districts on how they can use state and federal resources is crucial to improving student outcomes. Removing bureaucratic barriers will allow districts and schools to better align funds and focus resources on the unique challenges that face each classroom and each student.

Strategies to achieve these goals are outlined in Washington’s ESSA Consolidated Plan, which we submitted to the U.S. Department of Education on Sept. 18, 2017. The plan is entering the Department of Education’s peer review stage and we expect to receive feedback by the end of the calendar year.

ACCOUNTABILITY SYSTEM

Rarely does a chance present itself to reshape state and federal accountability in such a meaningful

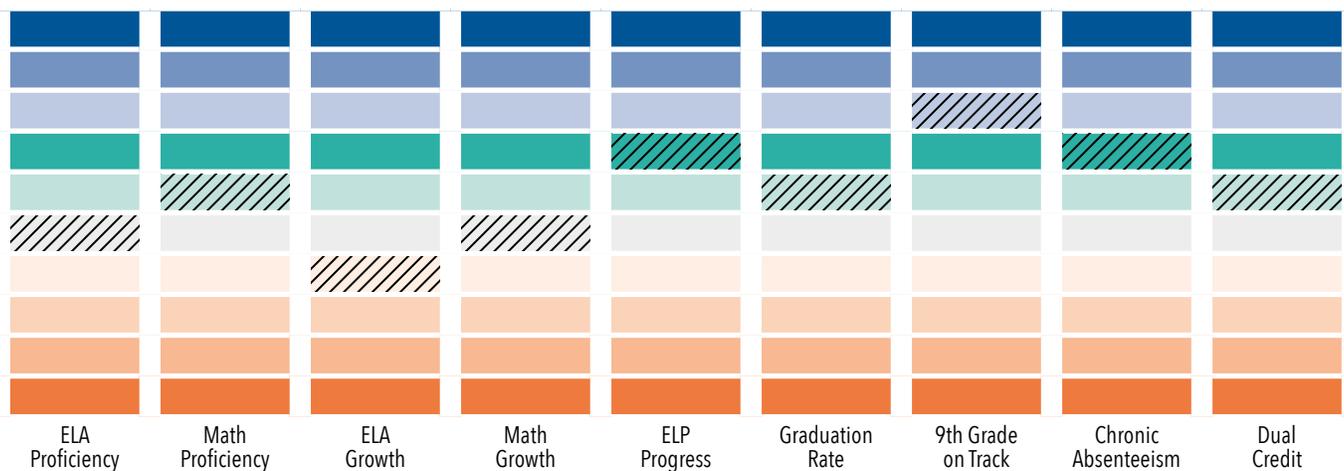
“The plan outlines our strategy to attract and retain high-quality educators by developing evidence-based professional development for teachers, principals, and other school leaders.”

way, and we took that opportunity with great honor. In collaboration with hundreds of principals, administrators, teachers, parents, and policymakers, we created a system that tries to strike a balance between federally-mandated assessments and the other areas that affect children’s success, including attendance and access to dual credit and advanced course-taking. In the end, we created a unified accountability system that aligns state and federal requirements and creates an opportunity to reshape

our OSPI Report Card into a useful data tool for improvement.

OSPI’s new accountability system moves away from a system driven by assessment and graduation to a system that embraces the success of the whole child. In addition to measuring for proficiency in English language arts (ELA) and mathematics through the Smarter Balanced Assessment, schools will now be measured on student growth, graduation rate, English Learner progress, and new School Quality and Student Success (SQSS) indicators. These SQSS indicators were included in ESSA to help communities see a broader picture of school performance. In consultation with stakeholder workgroups, OSPI will be rolling out three SQSS indicators in the 2017-18 school year: Attendance, 9th Graders on-Track to Graduation, and Dual Credit/Advanced Course-Taking. The success of Washington’s students relies heavily on their attending school, making effective transitions from middle to high school, and having opportunities to pursue challenging coursework.

MULTIPLE MEASURES SCHOOL ACCOUNTABILITY INDEX



The Accountability System will measure schools independently on nine separate indicators. Those nine indicators will be weighted and combined to create a score for Comprehensive Support. The indicators will be available on a data dashboard that can also disaggregate by subgroup, allowing districts to see which subgroups are in need of the most support. Sample scores are shaded above.

Continued on page 22

Continued from page 21

EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EFFECTIVE EDUCATORS

Washington's ESSA Consolidated Plan also works to help close equity gaps that exist in the teaching profession. In Washington's 2015 Educator Equity Plan, OSPI analyzed gaps in access to effective educators. These analyses found that students of color and low-income students are disproportionately more likely to be taught by inexperienced or out-of-field teachers.

“ Washington's ESSA Consolidated Plan also works to help close equity gaps that exist in the teaching profession.”

To close these opportunity gaps, OSPI will use Title II, Part A funding to develop initiatives to attract and retain effective educators. Working in collaboration with the Washington Education Association (WEA), OSPI plans to create a Teacher Training Design Team to develop, improve, and implement mechanisms to attract teachers, with an emphasis on effective teachers from underrepresented minority groups and teachers with disabilities. Title II, Part A funding will also be used to help districts develop career opportunities and advancement initiatives, assist in creating programs to mentor new teachers and principals, and much more.

SCHOOL CLIMATE

OSPI is committed to helping improve school climate. The ESSA Consolidated Plan outlines several strategies that OSPI is working on, including the implementation of a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) and the Learning Assistance



Program (LAP) Behavior Menu of Best Practices and Strategies.

OSPI is working with districts to implement MTSS in schools across the state. MTSS is a framework for continuous improvement that's systemic, prevention-focused, and data-informed. In the MTSS framework, three tiers of support are provided to narrowing numbers of students. All students receive Tier 1 services, such as the teaching of behavioral expectations. A smaller number will receive Tier 2 services, like behavioral check-ins. Finally, an even smaller number will receive Tier 3 supports, such as specialized programs or other, more intensive supports.

Additionally, OSPI has worked to end disproportionality in student discipline as required by 4SHB 1541. Changes made to state law include a requirement that long-term suspensions and expulsions must not exceed the length of an academic term, districts must use disaggregated data to understand the full impact of discipline policies on different subgroups, and districts must provide their discipline policies and procedures to students, families, and the community.

SCHOOL TRANSITIONS

One of the struggles many students face, from kindergarten to graduation, is the turbulence associated with new situations and schools. Transitioning successfully between the grade bands is vital to student success. ESSA requires that OSPI support districts in meeting the needs of students transitioning to the middle grades and high school to support their continued success. New measures such as 9th Graders on-Track to Graduation blend with new state laws regarding middle and high school transitions, including recent legislation that elevates and adds support for the High School and Beyond Plan.

The state of Washington has undertaken many initiatives in order to help students make successful transitions, and is using the added clarity and flexibility under ESSA to support students in each grade band:

- Districts have the opportunity to access Title I, Title II, and Title III funds to provide pre-kindergarten early learning programs, parent engagement activities, and transition programs to low-income children and English Learners.

- Middle school transition support will be expanded under ESSA with the design and implementation of guidance supporting summer school programs and community-based student mentoring.
- Student transitions from middle to high school are crucially important, and OSPI recognized that by including 9th Graders on-Track to Graduation as a SQSS indicator in our accountability index. If students fail just one ninth-grade class, their likelihood of dropping out of high school rises dramatically. This accountability measure comes alongside three continuing initiatives to help students stay in school: Student Learning Plans for at-risk students, High School and Beyond Plans for students to plan for their future, and the LAP Menus of Best Practices and Strategies, which offer research-based interventions for students who struggle with ELA, mathematics, or behavior.

“ One of the struggles many students face, from kindergarten to graduation, is the turbulence associated with new situations and schools.”

- Finally, OSPI works to facilitate transitions between high school and post-secondary aspirations by providing funding, resources, tools, data, and technical assistance to educators to ensure success, including Bridge to College transition courses, career and technical education and general education statewide equivalencies, career counseling, and more.

CONCLUSION

As OSPI moves closer to implementation of our ESSA plan,

work is moving forward to design guidance to help districts and schools make decisions on how to use state and federal funds to support their goals. By braiding state and federal funds, districts and schools are granted additional flexibility to focus their supports on students in need of individualized interventions. OSPI looks forward to working with districts, principals, and teachers during our implementation year, 2017-18, and into the future to provide unparalleled educational opportunities across Washington, helping every student become prepared for post-secondary aspirations, careers, and life. ■

LINKS:

OSPI's ESSA Consolidated Plan
<http://bit.ly/2igYOuT>

One-page flyers on the key changes to each program
<http://bit.ly/2hNtS1p>

USING DATA to Gauge Staff Readiness

Brett Willie

Principal, Hidden River Middle School

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Improving Instruction

As a principal coming into a new building, there are a dozens of critical items to consider as we get the “lay of the land.” This onboarding process can be daunting when considering things like the formal and informal components of culture, the spoken and the unwritten norms that exist, the perceptions and expectations of all stakeholders, and the historical complexities around initiatives, instructional practice, and staff buy-in. Truly understanding

the current reality of a building is so important and can set us up for future success or, quite frankly, a crash and burn experience if we misjudge or misread any of these areas.

For most principals, somewhere buried deep within this process lies the yearning to determine next steps for school improvement, knowing where we are now, where we should head next and how ready the staff is to move forward. School improvement is an ongoing conversation and we all come with experiences and beliefs

about what works best and what the right answers are. This “where we need to head next” reality can be a delicate precipice for principals in an educational system that is littered with well-intended—yet ineffective—initiatives and unfruitful ideas. So how can we wade into this effectively?

WHERE TO START?

When I became principal at Hidden River Middle School in 2014, this was the exact ledge I walked. I was

Continued on page 24

fortunate to have been an assistant principal at Hidden River the year prior and I mostly spent that entire first year building relationships and gathering information—listening, observing, asking questions, and pouring over loads of data around student achievement, staff climate, and stakeholder perceptions. In working closely with our leadership team it was becoming clear to me where we needed “to start,” but in my mind the question still remained: How ready is this staff to move forward? I believe strongly in the power of Professional Learning Communities and, in my view, any school improvement measure should be filtered through that lens. Our staff talked a good game around being a PLC, however the results didn’t show for it and the products from team meetings didn’t reflect it either.

“In working closely with our leadership team it was becoming clear to me where we needed ‘to start,’ but in my mind the question still remained: How ready is this staff to move forward?”

In early March of that year I decided to use a fairly straight-forward piece of data to gauge how ready our staff was to move forward. My strategy was to lob a simple piece of data into the middle of the table and see how the staff responded, listening very closely to their conversations. I used the following guiding principles to ensure this activity gave me the information I was looking for and also helped us, as a staff, arrive at the same conclusion around our crucial next steps.

“My message to the staff was that we were going to develop a habit of continuously using data, not to ‘prove’ anything, but to improve.”

STEP 1 – DATA IS A TOOL FOR IMPROVEMENT, NOT A WEAPON

In Mike Schmoker’s book, “Results: The Key to Continuous School Improvement,” he explains that “results — good or bad — are ultimately good, because they provide feedback that can guide us, telling us what to do next and how to do it better” (p. 3). I would venture to say that for most every staff, ours included, leading with this key concept is critical. Because we weren’t using data for much of anything, I knew there would be some hesitation, reluctance, and even some fear around it. My message to the staff was that we were going to develop a habit of continuously using data, not to “prove” anything, but to improve. Developing this muscle takes time and we are still working on it, three years later. For me it was extremely important to remind our staff of this concept as we launched into this initial data conversation.

STEP 2 – CHOOSE THE RIGHT DATA TO LOOK AT

Choosing the right data for your staff to look at and talk about is critical. I chose to use our failure rate data because it was something that each team and teacher could engage with, as opposed to data that was specific to one subject area or specific team like math or science. At that time we had twice the number of Fs issued at Hidden River in comparison to our feeder high school — and one quarter of the number of students! I knew that this would create some

shock value for our teachers, sparking great conversation. This piece of data was also important because, in my mind, it provided a direct glimpse into where our staff was at, mentally, in terms of owning student success and student failure. In a true PLC, a staff must shift their mindset around student vs. staff responsibility and failure rate data is a great way to gauge where a staff is with their beliefs on this foundational component.

STEP 3 – PROVIDE STAFF WITH SOME GUIDING QUESTIONS OR CONVERSATION PROMPTS AROUND THE DATA

It’s not uncommon for teachers, or even principals for that matter, to be given loads of data with no direction or focus on what is supposed to be done with it. The “data rich, information poor” adage that gets thrown around often stems from this very common experience. Because our staff was not accustomed to looking at data in this manner and for a specific reason, providing them with some conversation prompts or questions to consider was helpful to guide their discussions. For this specific exercise, I broke our staff randomly into smaller groups of six and had each group discuss the two very simple and straightforward questions below. These are open-ended questions and worded in a manner that allowed for many entry points of discussion:

- Why are our students receiving so many Fs?
- What are we going to do about it?

STEP 4 – STEP ASIDE AND LISTEN!

This is the most critical step and really the purpose of this entire exercise. How your staff talks about the data, the way in which they do so, and the specific comments they make about it is what you need to pay close

attention to. In general (sticking with our example around failure rate data), are they being reflective, talking about things that they can control? Are they taking ownership of the data and thinking about potential next steps? Are they focusing on things that they can't control, talking about the lack of responsibility from students and placing blame on parents and previous teachers? Are they questioning why they are being asked to look at data in the first place? Or, even worse, are they making comments about the "type" of kids here and the fact that "these kids just can't succeed"? How your staff talks about the data gives you great insight on how ready they are to move forward and, more importantly, where your conversation needs to begin. For example if, as you listen closely, you hear a lot of focus on parents not doing their job and the fact that "these kids just aren't responsible anymore," this is a really good indicator that you and your staff need to back way up and begin talking about why we are here, as educators, in the first place—your purpose as a staff and school.

Your staff may not be ready to talk about interventions and support structures if they aren't in a frame of mind to realize that they have direct control over, and responsibility for, student success. Or, if your staff is focusing on the fact that "our kids just can't do this," you have an even bigger cultural and belief issue to address. In Anthony Muhammad's book *Transforming School Culture: Overcoming Staff Division*, he talks about the harmfulness of "Perceptual Predetermination" (p. 21-22) and the belief structures of "Fundamentalists" (chapters 6 and 7) within a school, both of which have extreme impacts on student learning and school culture. If this is what you hear, as you listen, starting with what your staff believes about students would be most critical. For our staff there was a few of the "these kids just aren't responsible" comments but, for the

“ Using a simple conversation structure around data is a great place to determine where to start and how ready your staff is to move forward.”

most part, what I heard was a group of passionate and caring teachers, bothered by the obvious problem of too many kids failing, yet not sure what the answer was. This was great news because what it told me was that they were ready roll up their sleeves and begin the process of shifting our thinking around how we serve students and how we work together to guarantee student success.

STEP 5 – WORK WITH YOUR BUILDING LEADERSHIP TEAM ON NEXT STEPS

The final step in moving forward is circling back to the information gathered with your building leadership team, synthesizing the key pieces from the data conversation and then beginning to map out next steps. In addition to listening closely during that initial discussion, I had each table group capture their conversation by scribing the big ideas that emerged and questions that came up as the discussion unfolded. Our leadership team reviewed these notes together and came up with an initial game plan. It was out of this meeting that we immediately began building some critical school-wide interventions for students. This also opened the door for our leadership team to begin engaging the entire staff in some critical and foundational discussions around the type of school we wanted Hidden River to become for our kids, paving the way for a gradual shift in mindset that has occurred the past three years.

I believe that this initial data conversation with our staff, in 2014, truly was one of our key launching pad moments for what we have accomplished the last few years and the great things that are currently

happening for our students. It was out of this initial conversation that our staff began to wrestle with some difficult questions that have laid the groundwork for the way our teams serve students together, our pyramid of interventions and, most importantly, how we now own the responsibility for student success.

In looking at different data points each year we still use student failure rates as one small "dipstick" type measure for how we are making progress toward achieving our purpose as a school. In 2014 we had issued 653 failing grades by the end of the school year with an average of 36 students failing one or more classes each quarter. By the end of 2015 we issued 430 failing grades with an average of 19 students receiving a failing grade each quarter. By the end of 2016 that number dropped to 144 total Fs with only an average of nine students, each quarter, failing a class.

We still have a long way to go in ensuring ALL students are successful at Hidden River, but our staff is getting more and more comfortable using student achievement data to measure our success and our journey truly did begin in 2014 with our first staff discussion around our failing students. Just like we ask teachers to meet students where they are at, our call as principals is to do the same: meet our staff where they are and, most importantly, work with them to craft a plan for improvement.

Using a simple conversation structure around data is a great place to determine where to start and how ready your staff is to move forward. ■

Remarkable Leadership

2017
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OF THE YEAR



ELEMENTARY
ADINA BRITO

Evergreen Elementary
Shelton SD



MIDDLE LEVEL
DOUG KAPLICKY

East Valley Middle School
East Valley SD



HIGH SCHOOL
DAN BESETT

Wilson High School
Tacoma PS

What takes a principal from “great” to “remarkable?” Each year, AWSP recognizes three principals whose work goes above and beyond. The Principal of the Year awards honor a principal at the elementary, middle level, and high school level, providing significant recognition on the state and national level.

Our process starts with open nominations, so if you know a great principal or assistant principal, head to www.awsp.org/poy and nominate today. From our nominations, our elementary, middle, and high school component boards

take on the tough task of narrowing down the amazing administrators receiving nominations before deciding on a winner. This year, these three principals caught our eye with the ways they knocked their leadership out of the park:

- **Adina Brito**, Elementary Principal of the Year
- **Doug Kaplicky**, Middle Level Principal of the Year
- **Dan Besett**, High School Principal of the Year

Read on to find out just what made this year’s winners deserving of a little extra recognition. ■

2017 WASHINGTON STATE ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

ADINA BRITO

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap



Ironically, Adina Brito didn't see herself as a principal.

But the 2017 Elementary Principal of the Year has worked through that. As principal of the dual-language school Evergreen Elementary in Shelton, Brito saw beyond her own inhibitions in order to help students move beyond theirs.

As the first person in her family to attend college, she chose teaching because she wanted to have a positive impact on society. She taught for five years in Yakima before moving to North Thurston Public Schools, where she then taught for nine years.

It was then she began to reconsider her mother's suggestion to step out of the classroom and pursue a more prominent role, as a principal.

"All the principals I'd worked for or had as a student were official-looking and intimidating," she said.

But creating the conditions necessary for student success on a bigger scale, outside of the classroom, appealed to Brito.

"I got to this point where I wanted to see kids being successful on a grander scale, on a school-wide scale," Brito told the Kitsap Sun. "How can you make it a whole system so all or a majority of kids can have the same opportunity they might have if they're in that amazing teacher's classroom?"

Brito earned her administrative certificate at Seattle Pacific University in 2009 and had her first administrative job in Federal Way, as an administrative assistant, before returning to the North Thurston School District as an assistant principal at Mountain View Elementary for two years.

She has served as principal of Evergreen, the district's only dual language school, for the last four years. Many of Evergreen's parents have limited English proficiency, so Brito has made parent outreach a core focus of her work. Monthly Tea and Talk events help inform parents of school initiatives and to address concerns. She also works to create fun, hands-on activities that can be

replicated at home through other events like Reading and Math Nights so parents can engage in the learning process with their children.

“As the first person in her family to attend college, she chose teaching because she wanted to have a positive impact on society.”

"High expectations and standards for all is the rule for all students at Evergreen, but at the same time Adina is empathetic and passionate to ensure that all students succeed in all respects, not only academically," noted Shelton School District Superintendent Alex P. Apostle, Ph.D, who went on to add, "She is also a visionary and embraces the philosophy of challenging the "status quo" in her effort to provide the very best and challenging opportunities for both staff and students." ■

2017 WASHINGTON STATE MIDDLE LEVEL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

DOUG KAPLICKY

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap



Doug Kaplicky knows how to handle a curve ball.

So when the East Valley [Spokane] School District asked the middle school principal — a former marketing and public relations manager for the Los Angeles Dodgers minor league system — to transition a K-8 school to a middle school in just 42 days, he knew just what to do.

The process started with an empty 70,000 square foot building with no phones, computers, and a new staff flooding in from eight other schools. Kaplicky stepped up and successfully launched the school right from the get go, embracing his use of data along with his instructional leadership.

The result: A home run. Students, families and staff give Kaplicky high marks for launching the new school, and for his overall leadership.

“During his tenure at East Valley Middle School, Doug Kaplicky has exemplified what it means to be a

“ He has vision, follow through, and a true calling to serve students by putting kids in the middle of all decision making. He is thoughtful with his planning and execution of a whole school program and is intuitive to the needs of both the school and the greater East Valley Community.”

great principal and a great leader,” according to his assistant principal Stacy Delcour. “He has vision, follow through, and a true calling to serve students by putting kids in the middle of all decision making. He is thoughtful with his planning and execution of a whole school program and is intuitive to the needs of both the school and the greater East Valley Community.”

Now two years past the grand opening, Kaplicky attributes the smooth launch to his building’s work on school climate.

“Keeping middle school students happy can be a challenge, and we have students who are excited to come to school,” Kaplicky said in an interview just after the launch.

He’s also created opportunities for students and families to get more engaged in school including parent advisory groups, student reward systems — even home visits to help keep students on track and attending classes.

As middle level principal of the year, Kaplicky was one of 36 nominees for the honor.

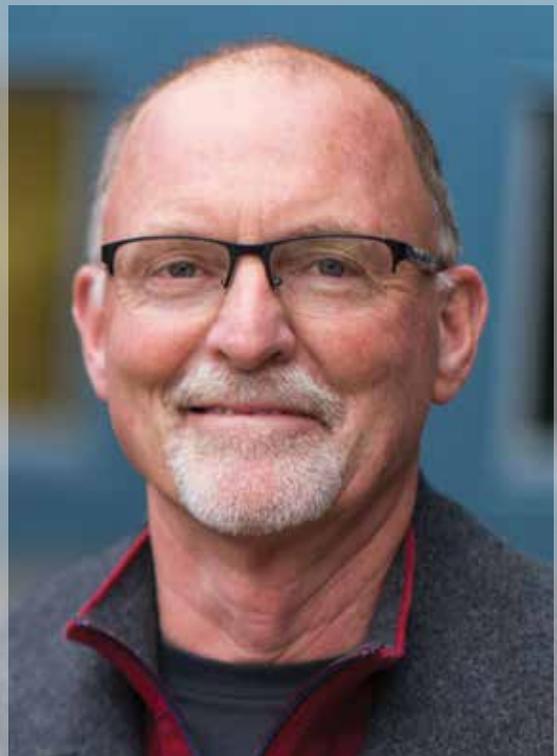
Kaplicky has been a school administrator for 13 years, serving as a principal for 11 of them. He earned his B.S. in Education in 1995 from Washington State University, where he also earned his Master’s and principal certification in 2002. ■

2017 WASHINGTON STATE HIGH SCHOOL PRINCIPAL OF THE YEAR

DAN BESETT

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Planning with Data, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap



If Wilson High Principal Dan Besett is indeed a rock star, then this year is his farewell tour.

As the 2017 Washington State High School Principal of the Year, Besett was already well-loved by students, families and faculty alike in the Tacoma area before the recognition was bestowed last spring. Under Besett's leadership, he set a state record by winning seven consecutive School of Achievement awards, dating back to 2011. Wilson's graduation rate has climbed to 94 percent, highest of any of the Comprehensive Tacoma high schools. Besett's dedication, focus on student success, and his support of all students and staff were prominent themes in his nomination.

"Dan really leads by example. He's the first one here in the morning and he's often the last one to go," said Bernadette Ray, Wilson's assistant principal. "He's the Ram Man. He's 100 percent Wilson Rams, every day."

He credits support from district administrators and the school board for helping him expand student options districtwide. This has allowed him to guide students toward different options, ranging from after school and summer classes, online credit courses and high school completion programs at area two-year colleges.

“ Under Besett’s leadership, he set a state record by winning seven consecutive School of Achievement awards, dating back to 2011.”

Besett took the reins as Wilson's principal in 2005 after serving as the school's assistant principal since 2000. Prior to that, Besett worked at the American International School of Lagos, Nigeria as part of a partnership fostered by the U.S.

State Department in the 1960s. Ironically, it was this time away that helped shape his passion for education back home. In an interview with the Tacoma News Tribune, Besett explained how, as an assistant principal, he once focused on school spirit and athletic programs. But time abroad shifted his focus back to academics for all students.

"I realized how much we have in the Unites States," he told the paper, noting that in Africa, he saw the value people place on education and on educators themselves.

In reflecting on his career, Besett says the real reward in all his years of teaching comes from seeing students achieve their goals.

"There is nothing better than helping a student who has hardships and challenges in life make it across the finish line at the Dome." ■

SOLVING FOR X:

THE PROBLEM WITH ALGEBRA

Eric Diener

Principal, Wapato High School

Thai Craig

Communications Officer, College Spark

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Planning with Data, Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap

LEARN MORE ABOUT THE PROGRAM AND WATCH THE VIDEO AT:
collegespark.org/grantee-results/wapato-high-school/

Like most schools, Wapato High School has a major challenge called algebra. Our students struggled with algebra, which resulted in a high failure rate in the classroom and formed a fixed mindset in our students for math in general. Students easily gave up on themselves which increased the likelihood of them becoming a non-graduate, placing a negative impact on their future lives.

"GROWTH MINDSET" ALGEBRA

Wapato High School staff implemented several programs to assist our students from traditional intervention courses to reformatting our student assessments. The results were minimal causing more frustration for all parties involved. Then in the spring of 2015, we received a grant that allowed us to incorporate in our schedule Intensified Algebra. Intensified Algebra infuses the concepts of a "Growth Mindset" with the teaching of algebra. The grant was for two sections of 25 students, and each section would require additional time than what our regular class periods provided.

The most important process to implementing the Intensified Algebra

program was planning and the set-up. The first step we took at Wapato was to select a "team" of teachers that have a "Growth Mindset" and are willing to work together. The two instructors that were selected already got along with each other and shared a desire to increase our students' algebra skills. As we built our master schedule, we made sure our Intensified Algebra teachers had common prep time and that the Intensified Algebra classes were two consecutive class periods.

“The first step we took at Wapato was to select a ‘team’ of teachers that have a ‘Growth Mindset’ and are willing to work together.”

Our next step was to dedicate the necessary technology for each of the classes. The Intensified Algebra curriculum has an online component, and we wanted our teachers and students to have full access to all the tools offered. Both classrooms were equipped with a computer cart. The Intensified Algebra teachers also received additional professional development from the partners of the grant. The people at Agile Mind are dedicated partners that perform site visits and summer trainings. The final piece was for the administration

to provide encouragement, which we did in weekly data meetings as well as classroom walkthroughs. The result of this hard work became apparent in a short period of time.

"FIXED MINDSET" REACTIONS

During classroom observations, we observed students engaged, talking math, and most importantly enjoying what they were doing in class. Students were sharing their thought process with their peers in a relaxed atmosphere. Several of the students, when asked their opinion of the Intensified Algebra class compared to their previous math classes, said that they enjoyed the class, and that they were finally understanding how to do the math.

The students in Intensified Algebra were outperforming the students in a regular algebra class. Ninety-six percent of the students passed the Intensified Algebra class compared to 57 percent of the students in the regular algebra classes. This was a remarkable result that we were going to celebrate. I presented the data to the math department, and I was shocked at what I heard from the non-Intensified Algebra teachers. One teacher said, "If I had the students for two periods a



A Wapato "Growth Mindset" student.



Principal Eric Diener

day, I would get the same results.”

The “Fixed Mindset” was strong with some of the staff and I needed to provide more information that proved that the Intensified Algebra program was changing student lives for the better. Therefore, I examined the Intensified Algebra students’ grades in English and found that they had a 20 percent positive difference than their peers. In fact, the trend was the same for social studies. I also noted that they had 10 percent discipline referrals compared to the students in regular algebra.

“ Math is still a major challenge for the staff and students of Wapato High School, but now we believe that we are ready for this challenge and together we will succeed.”

I presented this data to the entire staff and this time they were receptive and wanted to know more about how they can incorporate a “Growth Mindset” in their classes. As a result of the success of the Intensified Algebra program, the majority of the staff have read “Mindset” by Carol Dweck, and have been motivating students that they can succeed if they try. We have a phrase at Wapato: “When you first don’t succeed, avoid being frustrated. Frustration leads to quitting; instead, see the situation as a challenge and try again.”

Wapato High School has just completed our second year of Intensified Algebra. The students in the program are out-performing their peers by over 20 percent in most subjects. As a result of the success we had with the first year of the program, Wapato High School received a grant from College Spark of Washington



PROBLEM SOLVING: Wapato High teachers used a Growth Mindset to focus on and improve student algebra scores.

that allowed us to purchase the geometry curriculum from Agile Mind. The results of the first year was an 18 percent increase from the previous year in our geometry passage rate.

Math is still a major challenge for the staff and students of Wapato High School, but now we believe that we are ready for this challenge and together we will succeed. ■

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Connecting Elementary and Secondary Principals AN OPPORTUNITY WE ARE MISSING

Julie Perron, PhD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities

*“Learn from yesterday, live for today, hope for tomorrow.
The important thing is not to stop questioning.” – Albert Einstein*

As elementary and secondary principals, we are deeply focused on the students we serve, in present time: their grade level, academic and socio-cultural needs, the standards, and the accountability for ensuring achievement for all. Yet, clearly an understanding of the past, present and future are all key to student success. Hence, here lies our challenge: We must focus not only on who these kids are today, but also where they came from and where they are going.

Here are some practical and fun tips to build and sustain connections among our K-12 colleagues:

Reach out with family connections in mind. We often share students, at least sibling groups, between our various school levels. A strong and meaningful relationship can be created and sustained when we find positive ways to let families know we care, long after they leave a particular grade level. Big brothers and sisters, cousins and aunts and uncles can serve as a positive influence and way to build trust and culturally responsive interactions with parents. Often a phone call to a middle school checking on a sibling’s performance and attendance can shed light on family dynamics in a proactive way.

Learn together. Start a professional book study that has a K-12 perspective and encourage participation from K-12 principals. Some examples of books that could work for everyone are “Teach like Your Hair’s on Fire,” “Cultivating Curiosity,” “The Art of Possibility,” “Not Quite Burned Out, but Crispy Around the Edges,” “Teaching Outside the Box,” “Focus, Causes and Cures in the Classroom,” and “How Full is Your Bucket?” Book studies may occur before or after school (coffee chats or happy hour). In such settings, it is recommended that someone act as a facilitator who understands a bit of both worlds (elementary and secondary) who can move the conversation forward, but in a friendly way.

“We must focus not only on who these kids are today, but also where they came from and where they are going.”

Connect during administrative meetings based on common interests. Sure, you may have more in common with those who work in the same structural organization

as you, but welcome the learning curve that comes with learning a new subsystem or subculture. Encourage and seek opportunities to connect with colleagues with whom you don’t really connect with breakout sessions by zone (district), area of interest (common core, technology integration, social justice) or years of experience. In other words, consider sitting at a different table, or in a new area of the room.

Set up a principal buddy system. Create a “buddy system” program (pen pal/correspondence match) with weekly check-in. This could be through text, email, morning coffee, a phone call. The idea here is simple: Step outside of one’s own box, and look through someone else’s lenses with the idea that we are supporting all students in our system, even those who come before and those who are ahead of us. The buddy system isn’t to “fix” things, but rather to support each other as colleagues and learn something new at the same time.

Ask questions/embrace curiosity. We know our business and how things operate. We enjoy feeling confident and having a solution-oriented attitude towards our positions as principals. However, questions are an easy and equitable way to create connections. A secondary principal question might be, “How do you deal

with so many little kids at once in the lunch room?” And an elementary principal question could be, “How do you deal with so many giant teenagers in the lunch room?” While questions like this might seem trivial and slightly silly, they allow for us to break the ice and learn a little something about our daily work.

“Placing secondary students in positions of social responsibility is a positive move to remind our young adults of the role they must embrace in society.”

Get creative with partnerships.

Consider mentoring and role modeling opportunities among K-12 schools. Placing secondary students in positions of social responsibility is a positive move to remind our young adults of the role they must embrace in society. On the other hand, when elementary students observe older students in front of them in any capacity, they are engaged and pay attention. Dance troupes can visit elementary gymnasiums. Varsity teams can visit at lunch and recess to eat and chat with their young fans. High school choirs can perform at elementary school assemblies. Drama clubs can set up intro to theater events for younger students, and also provide personal invitations to see high school performances. Orchestra and band can provide introductions to music as well. High school student council officers can meet with elementary school young leaders to discuss issues of importance and provide mentorship. Also, in today’s digital era, students can share information on cyber bullying and pen-pal through blogs.

“Clearly, there is an opportunity to grow vertically as professionals when we reach out to those who serve our students of the past or of the future.”

Open your door. Have an open door policy to school visits. Invite each other to school assemblies and special events. When elementary students visit secondary campuses, the experience creates a visual for what is to come, and this brings an exciting sense of hope, rather than anxiety and fear. On the other hand, when secondary students visit elementary schools, they remember some of their fondest, most nurturing times, and feel a sense of pride for how far they can come as scholars.

No matter which of these suggestions prove to be possibilities for you, it is true that we have much to gain by learning about each other’s professional words. Personally, when I moved from the high school world

as a teacher and specialist into the elementary principal domain, I was a stronger, better-equipped leader for both my staff and my students. I no longer envisioned my role serving only the students on my campus; I became part of a larger cohort, committed to the moral imperative of preparing all students for post-secondary pursuits.

Clearly, there is an opportunity to grow vertically as professionals when we reach out to those who serve our students of the past or of the future. So get growing; you will be pleasantly surprised how building bridges with colleagues enhances your daily professional journey. ■

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BE BOUNDLESS

Why Science



Outdoors?

Martin E. Fortin, Jr.

Director of Learning Centers, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Aligning Curriculum; Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities

Last spring, I wrote about the advantages for principals in Washington state by having our own residential outdoor learning centers for our students. That was the “30,000-foot view” of our operations. Recently I heard a touching testimony about using the outdoors to teach science that was very personal and meaningful. Below is an excerpt from her presentation to the PEI Board of Directors. Heather Sisson is the elementary science instructional specialist for the North

Thurston Public Schools. As an outgrowth of her passion for science teaching she is also a facilitator and curriculum writer for the Pacific Education Institute (PEI). PEI is a nonprofit in Olympia that has brought us the concept of FieldSTEM®—using the outdoors to teach science. Heather is also a donor to PEI. Here is an excerpt from her presentation to the PEI Board of Directors describing why she is inspired by FieldSTEM® and why she donates to the effort to take students outdoors to learn.

I believe that our youngest children come to us with intrinsic curiosity. They are born scientists, making sense of the world by testing theories and asking questions. It’s a beautiful thing to witness a child making sense for themselves; their eyes get big when they realize they’ve figured something out. It’s what many teachers I mentor say is the reason they go into teaching — the “ah ha!” moment.

Eventually little scientists head into our schools, where they have a small window of time to decide whether they will continue asking and searching to build meaning for themselves or begin to lean on others to tell them why and how things are. I believe scientifically literate adults, or young adults, have maintained the wonder they carried with them when they entered elementary

school. They are creative thinkers and problem solvers. Their questions were respected and developed with support from adults who aimed at fostering curiosity. They continue to ask, “Why?”

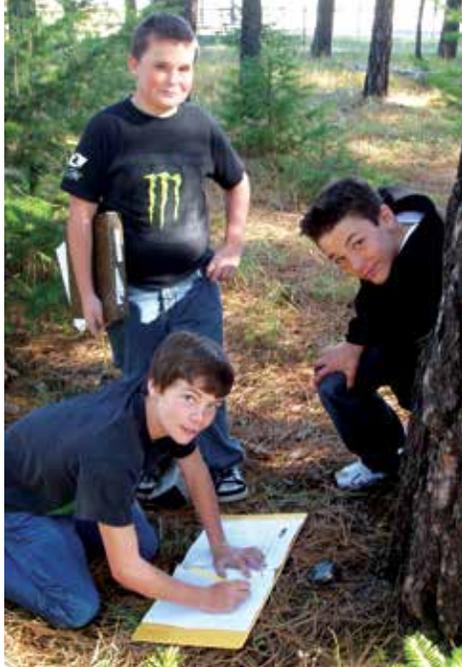
“It’s a beautiful thing to witness a child making sense for themselves; their eyes get big when they realize they’ve figured something out.”

We need to prioritize science and the learning opportunities it provides children inside elementary schools — and outside classroom walls — as equitably as other valued subjects like reading, writing, and math. Science

allows students to approach learning at whatever level of expertise they have when they first engage, to build their own meaning in a space where mistakes are visible steps to learning, and to celebrate the growth they have made regardless of whether they have arrived at the “final answer” yet or not. It is an equalizer to diverse populations and varied backgrounds who can be marginalized without multi-sensory learning experiences. Science in elementary school develops cooperation, discourse, evidence seeking, and reflection no matter the age of the scientists. You do not have to wait for a certain developmental level to be able to engage in “real science.”

In my district, my role as Elementary Science Instructional Specialist is to support teachers in service of growing more depth of scientific understanding in our students. I

“ In Thurston County, where they all live, five students shared that they’d never been around trees that tall, and two said they had not been to a creek or an ocean.”



champion prioritizing time to grow curious and reflective children through science.

The tenets I work within are Integrity, Authenticity, and Equity, especially with our highly mobile military population and diverse student backgrounds. Integrity and Authenticity are mandatory when building communities with new members frequently joining them, who aren’t afraid to fail, pull together, and work toward solutions or answers. Resilience has to be intentionally grown if you are going to be a courageous scientific community.

Equity is critical if a class is to look back on a learning experience and create meaning together. Any student excluded means one less meaning-making voice.

During my first year in this role, I joined a fifth-grade class that went out water quality testing with South Sound GREEN. This authentic, outdoor, citizen science project was impressive to me because our children’s data would inform “real science.” Students worked with chemical processes to run multiple trials, record data, and discuss right then what could have contributed to the readings they had taken! A few discussed how it would impact salmon runs.

I asked multiple groups of children what was the coolest part of their day, and I was sadly surprised. Sure, many said they felt like real scientists, or they liked applying what they’ve been studying in class. But, what struck me was that five of the 23 students said they liked being out near big trees. In Thurston County, where they all live, five students shared that they’d never been around trees that tall, and two said they had not been to a creek or an ocean. At 12-years old, that was saying something.

Gone are the days of assuming children have had “common experiences” when they begin school. This is now a large part of my job, tying equitable outdoor experiences

to Next Generation Science Standard learning targets in order to leverage more support within our educational systems, and connecting students to their environment and community through partnerships.

I love helping teachers try new things, engaging them as learners, supporting their goals, and collaborating with them around how to integrate subjects so that science keeps receiving a portion of the classroom day. I love helping them explore why science is important, and then helping them move into how it fits naturally into the way students learn and what they already are teaching, and stretching them to get students outside to give context to what they are studying. ■

If you share Heather’s passion for having all students in Washington state learn outdoors, visit PEI’s website: www.pacificeducationinstitute.org and AWSP’s Learning Centers website: www.awsplearningcenters.org to learn how you can engage students in your school to use the outdoors for learning. Heather’s full statement in support of PEI’s year-end campaign will be available on the PEI website later this year.

PASSION PROJECTS



Greg Barker

Assistant Principal, Snohomish High School, Snohomish School District
AWSL Leadership Camp Director Chair,
AWSP Student Leadership Committee

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

Leadership camp is a staple of summer for many students around the state. AWSP has been sponsoring leadership programs since 1956, and every year, we strive to meet the needs of our schools.

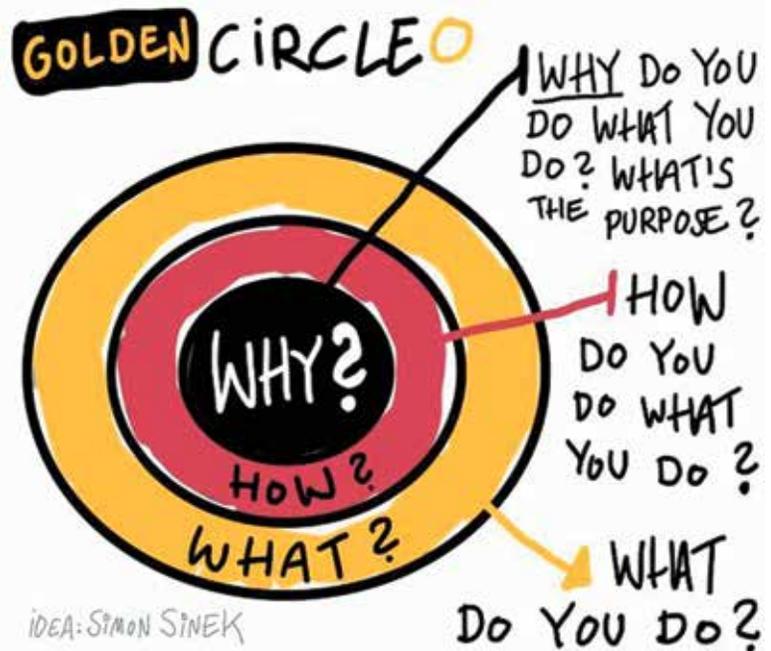
One of AWSP's goals (Goal 5) is directly tied to student leadership, providing programs that support and increase the academic and social success of all students. An element of focus for Goal 5 is:

To develop, identify, and implement strategies to help members support student voice and engagement, to improve school climate and culture.

All the summer leadership camps successfully tackle this area of focus in a variety of ways. Each summer at Mount Triumph (yes, there really is a mountain in Washington named this), we focus on Maslow's hierarchy of needs, paying close attention to safety/well-being and belongingness, as we move through our week at camp. Furthermore, we infuse our focus with Simon Sinek's work on the golden circle ("Start with the why"). The emphasis on these two ideas has led to what we believe is a fantastic

approach to student leadership within schools: passion projects. Mt. Triumph staff felt the need to ramp up student delegates' abilities to take tackling real life issues to the next level. A team of senior counselors dove headlong into this idea and developed a plan of action that allows all our delegates a safe place to ask questions, find the methods to begin to answer those questions, and then practice a strategy.

After spending time introducing and becoming familiar with Maslow and "getting to the why," staff



Motivational speaker Simon Sinek and his Golden Circle.

challenged delegates to delve into a question they had about an aspect of school. By focusing on the "why?" of their question, delegates were challenged to clarify their thinking while beginning to articulate those thoughts in conversations with others. From there, delegates met and discussed their question with dozens of other students, looking for others with similar questions. All of this was completed within the first six

“By focusing on the ‘why?’ of their question, delegates were challenged to clarify their thinking while beginning to articulate those thoughts in conversations with others.”

hours of arrival at camp, with perfect strangers from across the state (30 schools sending over 270 delegates).

Once groups formed around a similar question, they looked at how they might begin to explore possible answers. Thus, passion projects took on life. Each group developed a plan for further investigation into gaining more information for their project and/or practicing methods that they learned that would be applicable back at their home schools. Delegates supported every group by participating in a day of asking questions, activity action, and practice in involving others. Project titles included:

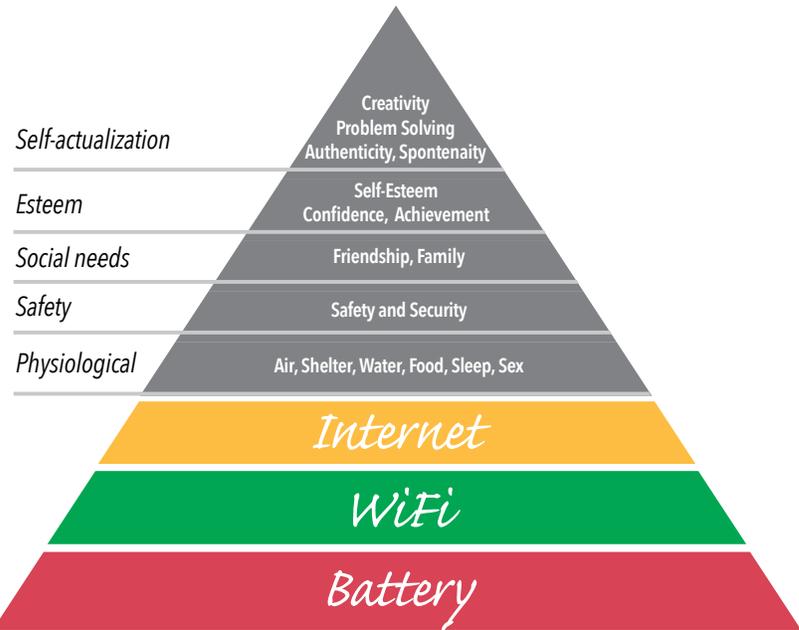
Operation Positivity,
 Student Participation Video,
 Underrepresented Group
 Appreciation, Operation
 Involvement, Back to Basics, ASL
 Lesson, Panel on Traditions/
 Legacy, Connect 4, Back to Basics,
 Don't Diss-Respect, Human Table,
 What Is There to Lose?, Prejudice
 Why, Mental Illness, CommUnity
 Crossline, Not What It Seems,
 It's Not Just Smarts, We Will
 Triumph.

These powerful projects were ready to implement on the fourth day of camp. Delegates were encouraged by what they could take back and the impact their work might have on the culture and climate of their schools.

“ While staff expected great results, we were astonished at the deep, meaningful questions developed by the delegates.”

Through their reflections, delegates expressed a sense of satisfaction in taking away skills they could use for life (questioning themselves and others, communicating their

MASLOW'S "NEW" HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



An updated version of Maslow's Hierarchy for Millennials.

ideas, challenging others' thinking, embracing vulnerability, and getting to the why). While staff expected great results, we were astonished at the deep, meaningful questions developed by the delegates. Questions were infused with their call to action and to their invitation to be vulnerable toward taking action with a variety of students from across the state.

Several years ago, the National School Councils (NatStuCo—formerly NASC) developed RSVP: *Raising Student Voice and Participation*, a student engagement program working on school reform. Over the last seven years, Washington piloted and trained many students at schools around the state. What students accomplished was fantastic, to say the least. Passion Projects is the next evolution in developing students as agents of change within their schools and communities. It allows individuals and small groups to find their voices and jump into action. What developed when students began with a small question and followed it to a conclusion was a powerful part of our camp this summer. Camp staff

are already working to continue the development of this project idea to new levels.

The final challenge for these delegates was to take their questions and passion projects back to their schools and to work with administration and advisors to make a difference. We're quite confident that we met the area of focus and look forward to celebrating those students' successes throughout the year.

We will work on a future article to check in with delegates and some of the work they began this fall. Some even contacted their administration and began working on the passion projects before summer was done! We look forward to sharing the amazing changes borne with a question, posed by a student leader, at Mt. Triumph Leadership Camp. ■

RESOURCES:

Simon Sinek
startwithwhy.com

Simon Sinek: How great leaders inspire action | TED Talk | TED.com

BE YOUR OWN BEST ADVOCATE!



Roz Thompson

Director of Government Relations and Advocacy, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Engaging Communities

At the National Principals Conference in Philadelphia this summer, I attended several presentations on advocacy. In one session, a panel member said, “If I had known how much influence I had as a principal, I would have put more effort into advocacy.”

Principals often shine the spotlight on the great work that is done by their students and teachers, but spending time being advocates for their profession, their building and their students with key community

members is important. One of our goals as advocates is to steer policy where we know it needs to go — where research shows we should go. Developing relationships beyond your school building can pay off for how decisions are made for the work that you do each day.

LOCAL INFLUENCE

Principals have a tremendous amount of influence at the local level. You are a valuable resource for your superintendent, district office administrators and school board members. You are their link to the reality of life in a school building. Invite them in often so that they can

“ If I had known how much influence I had as a principal, I would have put more effort into advocacy.”

see both the joys and the challenges of your work.

Connect with your district so that you are aware of and involved with key district initiatives. Research shows that district initiatives work best when there is principal support. In larger districts, divide and conquer. Talk to your principal group to see

how each of you might get involved with one district project or committee so that collectively you are all attending to many different issues.

Your parents and community members become your advocates when you connect with them to share specific examples of building needs. Build a coalition of parents who can speak to what is going well and to what resources may be needed to do better. Parent groups can then mobilize a wider network of parents on your behalf. Community groups like the chamber of commerce or service clubs can also be your advocates when you develop relationships with them.

“ Build a coalition of parents who can speak to what is going well and to what resources may be needed to do better.”

When issues are contentious and you are worried that you may isolate yourself or put yourself in a risky professional position, do what you can. Perhaps you only speak about the facts of the matter and do not share your opinion. Maybe you can say, “Are you aware that...” or “The implications of this might be...” Perhaps others, like teachers or parents, can be more public voices on your behalf. Every school has its own unique culture that will have to be carefully navigated. In addition, each district has different policies in terms of how principals might navigate social media so pay attention to those details so that you know what you can and cannot do.

STATE AND FEDERAL POLICYMAKERS

Develop relationships with your state and federal legislators. Reach out to them, especially before the legislative session begins in January, and invite

them to your school. You will most likely work with their legislative assistant to schedule a meeting, and getting to know this person is valuable as well. Emails and phone calls are great, too, but personal, face-to-face meetings are most effective. Legislators need to be informed about their constituents and visiting local schools is a real and authentic way to learn about their community.

QUICK TIPS FOR ADVOCACY

The NAESP and NASSP websites also offer tips on how to work with lawmakers, but here are some quick ideas:

- Pick three issues that are important to you and focus on one as your top priority that you cannot live without.
- Have an “elevator speech” ready to go about this issue — what would you say to a policymaker about this topic in 30 seconds?

- Pick one or two good sources of information about education to read once a week (like the Marshall Memo, EdWeek, or another publication).
- Become familiar with your national association’s advocacy page including their legislative platforms. These websites are great sources of information.
- Be sure to say “thank you” for work that has already happened on behalf of your school community and then suggest further steps if needed. ■

ADVOCACY TIPS:

NAESP Advocacy Tips:
www.naesp.org/advocacy

NASSP Advocacy Tips:
www.nassp.org/advocacy

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

“Fish swim their entire lives in water yet are unaware water even exists.”

That’s one of the revelations Dr. Caprice Hollins, CEO of Cultures Connecting LLC, brought forth for many people in a recent keynote address to the AWSP Mastering Principal Leadership Network.

This statement illustrates and clarifies a vital, yet often overlooked and under-prioritized, element of growth-minded, highly-impactful leadership...I’m talking about the make-a-difference-in-the-world, lifesaving, legacy-leaving leadership we all strive to exemplify. Dr. Hollins understands an ever-increasing awareness of the water (culture) in which we swim is foundational to being an effective leader.

Understanding how culture shapes perceptions, thinking, ideas and behavior is essential for effective leadership. Outstanding leaders increase their awareness of the water in which they swim and humble themselves to its profound impact on their capacity to lead.

Culture is a broad concept wrapped around an aggregate of various terms such as: equity, norms, beliefs, attitudes, ideals, ethics, laws, language, symbols and traditions. It is a fluid and vital part of our lives, influenced by those with passion and energy. The web of significance in

which we are all suspended¹, culture is ubiquitous and often taken for granted as how we do things around here. Justice, identity, morality and freedom: concepts such as these are at once abstract and utterly close to home. Our understanding of them helps define who we are and who we hope to be; we are made by what we make of them².

Culture, like water shaping a bedrock, forms our foundation as a society and configures our individual landscape of thought and behavior. The various elements of culture flow in deterministic, nonlinear ways and unpredictably contour the space we occupy. Competent leaders center themselves into an ever-deepening awareness of the cultural water in which they swim, finding comfort in the chaos. More importantly, culturally competent leaders explore how their water is perceived by and impacts others. This brings self-awareness, poise, insight, and empathy into the circumstances of other people’s lives, a connection to a great range of people, and the social competence to get things done³.

Culturally competent leaders are critically conscious of the water in which they swim and understand it has a profound subconscious impact on their attitudes, biases and, therefore, on all decisions they make. To become critically conscious requires an examination of how biases influence our decision-making. Ongoing dedication to deep

self-reflection is required practice for closing opportunity gaps at the source. Critical consciousness is prerequisite for understanding our biases, an essential component for truly impactful leadership, and it’s within anyone’s grasp if they prioritize their growth-goals accordingly. It is a foundational leadership habit-of-mind necessary for closing the chasms between our ideals and behaviors that result in opportunity gaps for students.

“ Culture, like water shaping a bedrock, forms our foundation as a society and configures our individual landscape of thought and behavior.”

Effective leaders close these chasms by learning from a variety of divergent, unfamiliar and underrepresented knowledge sources and perspectives. They purposely and continuously study how culture influences their thinking and how unconscious bias shapes their thoughts. Culturally competent leaders search for their own blind spots and spend time reflecting upon and critiquing the water in which they swim. They recognize closing opportunity gaps at the foundational level requires examination, critique and challenging the cultural biases driving collective

“As leaders, it is imperative to our community, school and students we understand and counteract the aspects of our nation’s culture resulting in dominance.”



Dr. Caprice Hollins

behaviors. Above all, the most competent leaders draw sustained attention to the dominant aspects of our culture that result in the marginalization and minoritization of the students we serve.

As leaders, it is imperative to our community, school and students we understand and counteract the aspects of our nation’s culture resulting in dominance. To do this, we must be able to clearly see the water in which we swim and, as critically conscious leaders, respond to facets of our culture that bestow unearned advantage or privilege predicated on dominance. Specifically, critically conscious, gap-closing leaders call out and deactivate the aspects of our culture negatively impacting our historically underserved groups of children. Those who can do that are “transformative” and focus on broadly conceptualized social justice, as well as intellectual achievement⁴.

Transformative leaders continually model how to dig deep and examine problematic bias, thoughts and behaviors. They create conditions and uphold expectations for all staff to identify, name and change socially constructed fear and suspicion. They maintain and model the expectation that trusting, caring and supportive personal relationships will be part of every child’s experience. With passion and persistence, transformative leaders illuminate and neutralize the language, behaviors and the systems causing disproportionate outcomes,

like the fact boys are suspended from school at twice the rate of girls.

Clearly, boys are not inherently maladapted or psychologically ill equipped for school compared to girls. Transformative leaders realize this and provide the support, diverse knowledge sources, time, resources and accountability necessary to cause change in the prevailing culture and systems. Gap-closing leaders model and teach all staff to continually evaluate their biases and behavior in order to measurably improve the outcomes for boys.

“Transformative leaders turn schools into places of liberation, equity for all students, and sites for academic and intellectual growth.”

With the same mindful, introspective, cultural critique, transformative leaders demonstrate how and require staff to critically examine the cultural waters contributing to the following statistics:

- Schools suspend students of color at three times the rate of white students.
- Suspensions are issued to African-American girls at higher rates than any other race or ethnicity.

- 40% of students being expelled from U.S. schools each year are African-American.
- Schools graduate African-American and Latino students at half the rate of white students.
- Schools suspend students with disabilities (regardless of race or sex) at higher rates than students without disabilities.
- Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual students are more than twice as likely as gender-normative and heteronormative students to have missed school in the past month because they felt unsafe or uncomfortable (36.6% vs. 14.7%).

Transformative leaders turn schools into places of liberation, equity for all students, and sites for academic and intellectual growth. Critically conscious, culturally competent leaders intentionally deconstruct negative ideas and images about groups of students and do not allow them to be seen as problems, as unmotivated, as uncaring... as “others.” They do not allow “difference to be equated with deficit.” Gap-closing leaders understand the *single most important factor in the academic achievement of minoritized students is the principal’s explicit rejection of deficit thinking.*⁵

Gap-closing leaders create, expect and lead a hopeful school culture where students’ mental and motivational

Continued on page 43

Our quarterly profile of educational leadership in Washington state.

Sue Anderson

Educator Effectiveness Director, OSPI



In this edition of Honor Roll, we are proud to feature Sue Anderson, the 2017 recipient of the AWSP President's Award. Presented each spring, this honor is given to a person outside of the association who has advocated on behalf of principals and the principalship in Washington state.

What made you decide to go into public education?

After college, I had an inkling I might want to teach and was very interested in experiencing living in another culture. I joined the Peace Corps and spent two years teaching biology and chemistry in the Democratic Republic of Congo. I loved teaching — the ways kids constantly surprised and amazed you, the creativity involved in figuring out new and better ways of supporting their learning, the sense of being part of something enduring — and entered a master's program in education when I returned to the U.S. I was hooked, and I've never looked back.

What was your favorite thing about being an assistant principal?

I loved many things about the job. Being part of a school team — having that opportunity to work with the admin team, school staff, and students to make positive things happen — was great. I generally liked that each day was so different, and often had little resemblance to the day you had planned on your calendar. And while there were heartbreaking lows in the work, there were also times that filled you with indescribable joy. I've had many different roles as an educator and

loved them all; this was both the most challenging and the most rewarding.

You're the Director of Educator Effectiveness at OSPI. What exactly does that mean? What do you think are the keys to being an effective educator and how do we create more of them?

I think of our work as ensuring that school districts and our education partners have the policies, programs, and financial resources they need to support teachers and principals in becoming their best educator selves. We're able to do that in our office through our work on TPEP, National Board certification, and the BEST program for new teachers. All three programs receive solid support from the Legislature, which helps a great deal.

I believe the keys to becoming an effective educator are being curious about your strengths and challenges (and using the instructional and leadership frameworks to better discern those!), ensuring you have the resources you need to grow in the challenge areas, and then working at it — preferably with thoughtful colleagues. For teachers, principals play a key role in supporting this, but they can't do it alone. How can principals leverage the skills — both formal and informal — of the teacher leaders in

their schools, to coach their peers? This is pretty natural in schools that have fostered a growth culture. Our revised Focused evaluation process really supports this, because it keeps the conversation about effective practice, not about the score.

“ And while there were heartbreaking lows in the work, there were also times that filled you with indescribable joy.”

There are also the skills of being able to talk with teachers about their practice in ways that really support their learning and thinking. We have a long history in our state of providing professional learning for mentors, coaches, and principals on Laura Lipton and Bruce Wellman's learning-focused conversations, and the people who use these skills find them to be really helpful.

One other key to becoming an effective educator is to know what students think about things, both at the school and classroom levels. The best way to know this? Ask them! The work some districts have been doing with student

perception surveys in the past year has been really exciting. It's helping educators become aware of things they might not otherwise know.

What do you do to unwind and relax when you're not working?

Hiking, skiing, and canoeing with my husband, Rick, joined by our kids and friends when they can, are high on the list. I also love to run, read and bake. I joined a community choir last year (no audition – whew!) and that has been a wonderful addition to my life.

What's the best book you've read recently, professionally or personally?

I just read, "Waking up White," by Debby Irving, and it was the right book at the right time for my own personal and professional growth. For TPEP, we've been working with Heidi Schillinger on racial equity, and she talks about becoming "color brave." This book has helped me on that journey. ■

resources are not diverted away from learning. They maintain a culture of high standards and one where every single adult deeply believes, at their core, all students can and will achieve because of the experiences and encouragement the adults provide.

Our most effective principals – transformative, critically conscious, gap-closing principals — are systems leaders heavily focusing on culture and maintaining an unwavering belief in the following fact:

We can, whenever and wherever we choose, successfully teach all children whose schooling is of interest to us. We already know more than we need to do that. Whether or not we do it must finally depend on how we feel about the fact that we haven't so far.

-Dr. Ron Edmunds

As you examine your data, schedules, policies and procedures throughout the year, and each year as you

tweak the master schedule and your messaging, and as you evaluate the managerial and technical side of your school to find and respond to gaps in opportunity, remember where it all starts. Don't be a fish, but if you are, make sure you know you're wet. ■

¹ Terrence E. Deal and Kent D, Peterson (2009). *Shaping School Culture: Pitfalls, Paradoxes, & Promises*

² Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Harvard Professor (2010)

³ Claude M. Steele (2010). *Whistling Vivaldi: How Stereotypes Affect Us and What We Can Do*

⁴ Carolyn M. Shields (2013). *Transformative Leadership in Education: Equitable Change in an Uncertain and Complex World*

⁵ Michael Eric Dyson (2017). *Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America*



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The Empathy Quotient

Gary Kipp

AWSP Executive Director

I have seen the video, “The Adaptable Mind” so often that it has become like that song you can’t get out of your head. It’s difficult for me to turn around these days without running into another article that connects back to the tenets of the video, which prophetically describes five characteristics today’s youth must have in order to succeed in tomorrow’s world – Curiosity, Creativity, Initiative, Multi-disciplinary Thinking and Empathy. I feel like the video is the paddle and I am the ball, connected to the paddle by an elastic band on one of my favorite (and my mother’s least favorite) toys growing up — the paddleball.

1. POLITICAL TOLERANCE: OLIVIA CAPESTANY, ROOSEVELT HIGH

I read a powerfully insightful article in the Seattle Times in early September. We in education know that if you want powerful insight, you turn to your students. Olivia Capestany, a senior at Roosevelt High School, hit a home run in her article about the need for more political tolerance at her school. She describes the emotional reaction she had when her journalism teacher invited in a recent graduate to speak to the class following the election. He was wearing a red Make America Great Again hat and supported Trump in the election. During the discussion, Olivia, a Clinton supporter, became distraught. “I was so upset, I had

to run out the room to calm myself down. After a few minutes of deep breaths, I realized that he felt as strongly about his beliefs as I do about mine and I should respect him.”

“ Olivia Capestany, a senior at Roosevelt High School, hit a home run in her article about the need for more political tolerance at her school.”

She went on to describe growing up in a Cuban American family and the impact that has had on her valuing free speech, “because in Cuba, that privilege was limited. I think that’s why I struggle with intolerance, especially if it’s me being the intolerant one.” She returned to the class and continued to participate in the discussion. The “ah ha” moment for her came the next day in the follow-up discussion. “There were many different feelings expressed, but the common thread was shock. Nobody had ever talked to anyone like him before. That surprised me. I never realized how little political diversity there was in my school, and it opened my eyes to the fact that there were probably other students who, like Machala [the speaker], were loyal to Trump but too afraid to speak up.”

Olivia expanded on this topic and offered advice for schools today. She also personalized it by sharing what she plans to do. “Going into my senior year, I hope to encourage respectful and robust debates in my classes and maybe participate in several of the new clubs. Although the clubs are just starting to change the climate at Roosevelt, these students may have found a solution — simply listening to each other.”

2. MICHAEL BENNETT’S LAS VEGAS INCIDENT

Olivia’s article was followed the next day in the Times by a column from sports writer Larry Stone, which presented the same theme in front of our faces to analyze our reactions to the Michael Bennett incident in Las Vegas. “My hunch is that you saw this incident — in which the Seahawks star said a gun was held to his head by Las Vegas police — through the prism of your previously held beliefs. People are hunkered down on this issue — as they are on so many issues in our increasingly divided society.” In this article, Doug Baldwin channeled Olivia Capestany as he counseled Bennett in the aftermath of the incident. “My initial reaction was, ‘Let’s think this through,’” Baldwin said. “Let’s not allow our first order of thought, which is based on emotion, to cloud our better judgment.”

Doug Baldwin has been a voice for thoughtfulness in the past and he used this opportunity to once again

READ OLIVIA CAPESTANY’S ARTICLE AT:

seattletimes.com/education-lab/student-voices-my-class-talked-with-a-trump-supporter-heres-what-i-learned/

“Again, my challenge and my encouragement to everybody who’s interacting and engaging with this story, is to be empathetic. I can’t say it any more. I think that’s our number one problem in society, that we’re just not empathetic. I understand everybody has their own political views, their own ideals of what’s right and what’s wrong. But if you put yourself in someone else’s shoes, just for a moment, maybe you might act and think differently than you normally do. And the same for the other side. If they put themselves in the other side’s shoes, maybe they’d act and think differently as well.”

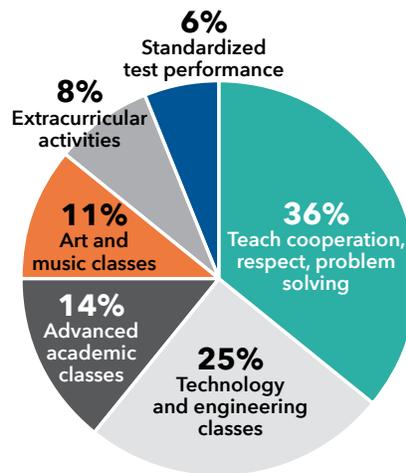
3. PHI DELTA KAPPA POLL ON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

These two articles brought me back to *The Adaptable Mind*, but isn’t the public much more concerned with schools scoring well on things that are assessed on standardized tests than worrying about how students

interact with each other? As it turns out, no, they are not. In this year’s 49th Annual Phi Delta Kappa Poll of the Public’s Attitudes Toward the Public Schools, the responses to the question, “What is the most important factor in school quality?” are as follows:

Most important factor in school quality

PDK National Totals, 2017



“Again, my challenge and my encouragement to everybody who’s interacting and engaging with this story, is to be empathetic. I can’t say it any more.”

4. INTELLIGENCE, CREATIVITY, AND WISDOM AND THE WAY WE THINK

A recent online article in the PDK Newsletter by Cornell professor Robert J. Sternberg sent me back to the video once more. The article, “Testing: For better or worse,” begins by outlining the reasons for the enormous increase in IQ scored around the world in the 20th Century. In Figure 1, he compares intelligence to creativity and wisdom. In his article, he states that “creative and wise thinking differ in many respects

Continued on page 38

Figure 1

Differences between problems requiring general intelligence, creativity, and wisdom

	INTELLIGENCE	CREATIVITY	WISDOM
Kind of thinking	Largely convergent	Largely divergent	Largely dialectical and dialogical
Degree of structure	Generally well-structured	Generally ill-structured	Always ill-structured
Dependency of context	Often low context dependency	High context dependency	High context dependency
Existence of a single correct answer	Often a single correct answer	Often multiple good answers	Multiple, usually not quite optimal, answers
Role of originality	Often low	Always high	Usually high
Role of knowledge	Usually positive	Not always positive	Usually positive but limited
Role of values	Often hidden, not apparent	Partial role	Important role
Objects of thinking	Ideas, things, or people	Ideas, things, or people	People
Dependence on multiple perspectives	Often low	Often high	Often high
Short- vs. long-term rewards	Short and/or long	Usually long	Short and/or long
Role of common good	None in particular	None in particular	Critical
Role of ethics	Typically none	Typically none	Critical
Role of competing interests	Typically none	Typically none	Critical
Ease of teaching and testing	Easy to moderate	Difficult	Difficult
Rewards in educational contexts	Usually, positive	Sometimes positive, often negative	Sometimes positive, often negative

from the kinds of thinking required for getting high scores on tests of traditional cognitive skills.”

“ Our world would be a safe and wonderful place for most of us to live in if only our creativity and wisdom had improved in the last century the same way our intelligence did.”

According to Sternberg, there is evidence that the improvements we have made in general intelligence might have come at a cost to creativity and wisdom. “Our world would be a safe and wonderful place for most of us to live in if only our creativity and wisdom had improved in the last century the same way our intelligence did.”

As we move forward with the implementation of accountability measures in ESSA, principals can play a key leadership role in not letting that bright shiny object blind students, staff and communities to the imperative challenge of our graduates becoming empathetic, creative, complex problem-solvers who take the initiative necessary to solve the global issues facing our country this century. ■



Gary Kipp has served as AWSP's executive director since 2003. He has more than 40 years experience as a teacher, assistant principal, principal and assistant superintendent.

Humor me!

Created by **David Ford**, Retired Washington State Principal



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