

Washington Principal

ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

WINTER / SPRING 2019



LEADERSHIP LESSONS

FROM GEORGIE (THE DOG)
AND WALDO (MY BRAINTUMOR)

ALSO IN THIS ISSUE

- Peril in the Principalship
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- Inclusive Leadership

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COVER STORY



LEADERSHIP LESSONS

FROM GEORGIE (THE DOG)
AND WALDO (MY BRAIN TUMOR)

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Photo by Max Yuryev

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1021 8th Ave. SE • Olympia, WA 98501-1500
 360.357.7951 • www.awsp.org

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Andi Mounts, Finance Director
Kim Marquette, Assistant to the Executive Director and Meeting & Event Planner
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Kurt Hatch, Associate Director
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National Affiliates

National Association of Elementary School Principals
 National Association of Secondary School Principals

Who Cares About Seasons Anyway?

David Morrill

Communications Director, AWSP

First, an apology for making you, our dear reader, wait so long for this issue. We know you've been eagerly checking your mailbox each day in anticipation, that is, if this magazine didn't get lost in a jumble of mail or head straight to the recycling bin. But hey, if you're reading this now, you're either doing it online or it successfully made its way to you. Secondly, thanks for reading and for your patience.

In previous issues, I've written about the massive change we're undergoing internally, from implementing a new phone system (yesterday), to tackling bigger systems like our data and financial management systems. Serving principals and assistant principals is why we exist, and we do our best to make our current internal chaos outwardly invisible. What you're seeing here with the magazine delay is an example where we couldn't quite do that.

Either way, you should have two great issues in a short period of time. You probably won't get to all the articles as you wind down your school year, but now you finally have that summer reading list you've always dreamed of. But in all seriousness, we are very grateful to all of the amazing principals and assistant principals who contribute their stories, knowledge, and expertise with submissions. The more we can include member voice, the stronger we are as an association. So if you've ever felt the urge to write and share your successes, your trials and tribulations, and your learning, please reach out to me. We'd love to see a magazine contribution and we're always looking for great content for our blog.

In the meantime, enjoy another great issue of *Washington Principal*. It might not be prompt, but thanks to some amazing authors, we hope you think it's worth the wait. ■



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

Five Tips for Dealing with Difficult Parents

Editor's Note: Instead of a traditional column for this issue, we wanted to share some great advice from Ken Schutz, our AWSP President for 2018-19. The tips come from Ken's Fast Five video. Make sure you're subscribed to our YouTube channel so you never miss any great content from us.

Ken Schutz

Principal, Joel E Ferris High,
Spokane PS

1) SAY THANKS.

Thank parents for their communication. If it's via email or in person or a telephone call, make sure you thank them for their communication and also thank them for caring about the kid. That alone can turn around the situation.

2) LISTEN INTENTLY.

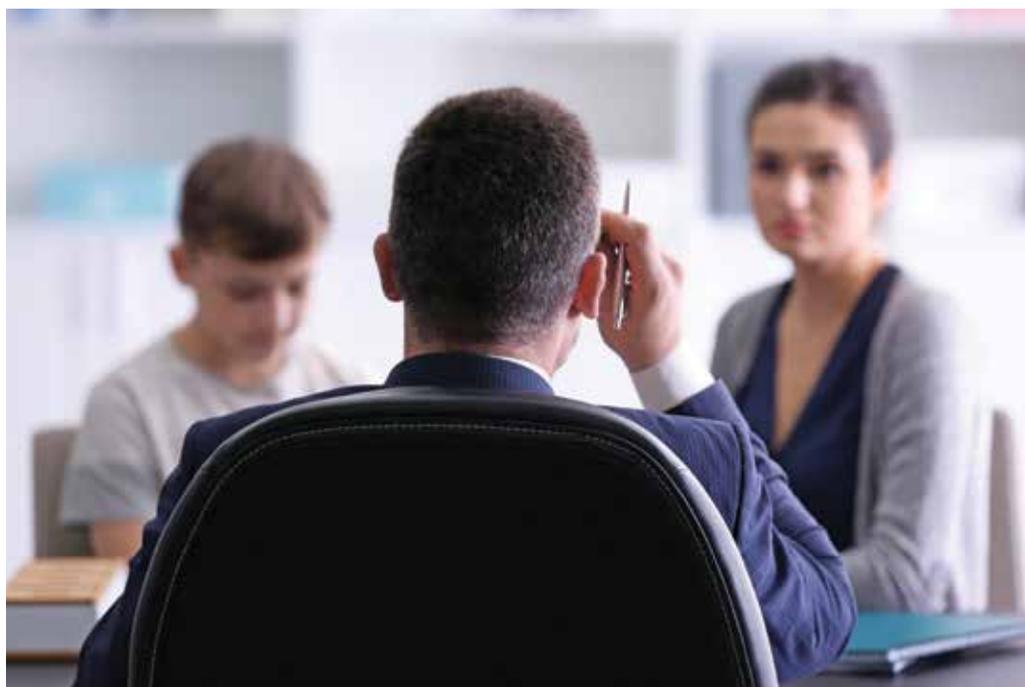
Some parents just need to vent.

3) CONNECT PARENTS WITH STAFF.

If it's a complaint regarding a staff member, make sure to talk to them about it. That's so important in your trust with staff. Also, take your time. Dealing with difficult parents may take some time for you to investigate, and you might have some decisions to make. Tell parents you're going to get back to them, and get back to them when you tell them you're going to get back to them.

4) CONNECT WITH THE STUDENT.

Sometimes the student has a completely different version of the story than their parents. Make sure you talk with them to find out what the real issues are.



5) AGREE TO DISAGREE.

Finally, if you've done everything possible to try to please this parent, agree to disagree. Sometimes that just happens, and if it does, please loop in your supervisor and central office people. Let them know a phone call or communication might be coming, and let them know the circumstances. They'll definitely appreciate it.

All these tips can help you with dealing with difficult parents. ■

Do you have any other tips for dealing with conflict or difficult parents? We'd love to hear about them. Send them our way. Email webmaster@awsp.org.



Ken Schutz is principal of Joel E Ferris High in Spokane Public Schools and is serving as AWSP president for the 2018-19 school year.



Registration for the Equity Conference is Now Open

The 2019 Equity Conference is taking place May 22 at the DoubleTree Hotel in SeaTac. Registration is now open! Hosted annually by AWSP, WASA and WSSDA, the goal of the Equity Conference is to increase organizational leadership capacity by providing systemic strategies for equity and access so all students can achieve at a high level. Participants from school districts, ESDs, and state agencies will focus on research-based, high-leverage core practices necessary for organization growth in leadership for equity. This year WSSDA is the office of record and all registrations will be processed through them. Learn more and register at www.wssda.org.

Three New AWSP Business Sponsors/Partners for 2019

AWSP is excited to announce that we have not one, not two, but THREE new business sponsors/partners this year!

Capturing Kids Hearts (The Flippen Group): "If you have a child's heart, you have their mind" is the core belief of



Flip Flippen, founder and chairman of the Flippen Group. All communities, whether inner city, suburban, or rural, are facing many similar challenges. Children and teens are hurting and at risk. Educators are heavily burdened and in need of tools and techniques to help. Capturing Kids' Hearts offers an integrated solution that turns these situations around and shines a light of hope.

AWSP Survives the Snowpocalypse

AWSP survived the Snowpocalypse of 2019, and we hope you did, too. Thank you for your patience as we navigated snow days and email delays!



FreshGrade: The FreshGrade for Schools and Districts solution provides leaders with the ability to track progress towards strategic initiatives, ensures the privacy of student data, and offers services and support to help achieve goals. And because they developed the technology themselves, they are committed to ongoing improvement and innovation. (Learn more in this issue's "Appy Hour"!)



Microsoft: Microsoft's mission and values are to help people and businesses throughout the world realize their full potential. They believe in a future where every person has the skills, knowledge, and opportunity to achieve more. Learn more on their website about how they give technology and resources to make a

lasting positive impact.

Learn more about AWSP's business partners and sponsors on our website.



Contract and Pay Gap Resources on the AWSP Website

We know many of you have lots of questions about principals contracts. We've put together some information on the pay gap and contract negotiations for you on our website, plus some data from our fall survey. Check it out at www.awsp.org/paygap.



Future Educators Month was a Success!

In February, we promoted growing the education profession with Future Educators Month. We sent our principal and AP members a “key” to give to a student or teacher who they thought would make a great future principal. Here’s the question: Did you give away your key yet? If not, it’s not too late! Never underestimate the power of your encouragement in the life of a future principal. If you gave your key away, we’d love to hear your story. (Email us at webmaster@awsp.org.) If you didn’t, it’s not too late to make an effort to change the course of someone’s life forever.



Vicki Puckett

Vicki Puckett Named the First NASSP Quarterly Advocate of 2019

Congratulations to Mercer Island High School’s Vicki Puckett, a member of our advocacy committee and high school board. She was chosen as the NASSP Quarterly Advocate for all her

great work advocating for principals at the national level. Vicki understands the power and importance of using her voice. Awesome work, Vicki!



Launching Principal Leadership Network

The Launching Principal Leadership Network brings new and newly assigned administrators three opportunities to maximize their leadership during the first year. Attendees will hear from practicing principals and other educational experts on planning your first 100 days, building relationships, establishing routines for your “new normal,” and assessing the climate and culture of your school to identify next steps.

Stage 1 is July 22-23, 2019 at ESD 113 in Tumwater. Learn more and register at www.awsp.org/LPL.



Aspiring School Leaders Network

A critical turning point in an educator’s career is when the decision is made to become a school leader. The Aspiring School Leaders Network three-stage cohort series is designed to provide resources, guidance and supports to those who have set their sights on leading and transforming educational systems for all students. Attendees will learn how to enhance their administrative internship experience, hear from successful veteran leaders in the field and gain valuable insights on preparing for employment in a leadership role.

Stage 1 is July 29, 2019 at ESD 113 in Tumwater (Westside) and July 31, 2019 at Enduris Training Center in Spokane (Eastside). Learn more and register at www.awsp.org/ASLN.



Building Effective Leadership Network

The Building Effective Leadership Network brings administrators three opportunities to maximize their leadership during year 2 and beyond. Content will focus on building successful systems in your school, fostering personal and institutional wellness, building your team, and establishing goals.

Stage 1 is July 24-25, 2019 at ESD 113 in Tumwater. Learn more and register at www.awsp.org/BEL.

Meet Macy Bruhy

She doesn't wear a cape, but she is definitely super. Meet Macy Bruhy, AWSP's Professional Learning and Marketing Coordinator. Macy joined AWSP in March 2015 with seven years of business experience in marketing and communications. Macy keeps our professional learning events running smoothly by leading our marketing efforts, coordinating event registration both onsite and in the office, and organizing the Professional Learning Committee. She also manages the State-Funded Intern Grant Program and advises AWSP's communications efforts. We have yet to find a challenge that is too hard for Macy, as she handles each task with grace and ease. When Macy isn't at work, she's likely spending time with her husband and two young daughters, camping, working on home projects, going on adventures, and spreading sunshine throughout Washington.



Macy Bruhy

Did You Know?

Each year, thousands of students experience the magnificent beauty of Washington state at one of AWSP's two outdoor learning centers. Many of those same students are now parents, and they are excited to send their own kids to "camp" to embark on building their own lifelong memories.

AWSP is the only principals' association in the nation that has its own outdoor learning facilities. We first began our outdoor education program in 1981 at the Cispus Learning Center in Randle. In 2003, Chewelah Peak Learning Center opened 50 miles north of Spokane.

Our outdoor learning centers are available for environmental education and leadership training for Washington state students. Both facilities offer meeting rooms, audio-visual equipment, curricular resources, challenge courses, recreation areas, and much more.

Make plans to visit our facilities this spring! To learn more, visit www.awsplearningcenters.org.



FreshGrade

This issue's Appy Hour features AWSP's brand-new business partner, FreshGrade.

FreshGrade is a portfolio, assessment, and communication platform that integrates authentic evidence of learning with flexible assessment tools and real time communication for a holistic approach to teaching and learning.

And it's FREE for teachers, students, and parents! So how does it work?

- Teachers create assignments, which might include instructions, handouts, videos, links, or rubrics to get students started.
- Students upload images, videos, audio, and documents to assignments in their portfolios. Since FreshGrade is compatible with hundreds of other apps, they can pull their work from nearly anywhere.
- Students, teachers — even parents — can comment on student work in context, making it easy to create a timely and meaningful feedback loop.
- Embedded Google Translate makes it easy for ALL families to communicate with teachers, regardless of what language is spoken at home.
- Unlimited sorting and filtering options make it simple to customize the view to show only the learning moments you wish to see.
- FreshGrade supports your scoring methodology. Asses student work with standards-based grading, activity-based completion, or create your own custom assessment scale.
- Teachers easily apply Washington Learning Standards to assignments for efficient grading.
- FreshGrade's new, holistic grading view enables teachers to assess across multiple objectives for an assignment that has multiple artifacts (such as documents, photos, and videos) all from one view.

FreshGrade also has FREE, on-demand teacher training available 24/7 through FreshGrade's Professional Learning Center at <https://learning.freshgrade.com>.

Learn more about this amazing app at <http://bit.ly/FreshGradeAWSP>

Or try it for FREE at freshgrade.com.

ASK A PRINCIPAL

We asked members,
“If a genie came along and granted you one professional wish, what would it be?”

Here are some of the great responses we received:



“If I had one wish, it would be that all students and staff had the same access to facilities/education/resources that students and staff from wealthier districts or private schools had. How nice would it be to have a turf baseball/softball field, a performing arts center, a district math coach, a curriculum director, smaller class sizes, computers for every student/staff member, etc.”

Sarita Romero Whitmire-Skeith
Principal, Sultan High, Sultan SD



“My wish would be to have student housing for my students who are homeless and to have a community health center at school (including mental health services) for my students and their families.”

Heather Fowler
Principal, Legacy High, Evergreen PS

“The magical power to remember every student’s name, all 2,000 of them!”

Eric Anderson
Principal, Wenatchee High,
Wenatchee SD



“A jar of magic dust that I could sprinkle on kids and reduce their number of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Students are resilient, but it hurts to see students with the deck stacked against them.”

David Kirk
Principal, Omak High, Omak SD

“My wish would be for better mental health care for our at-risk population that didn’t require parents and schools jumping through a million hoops to get the early intervention kids need!”

Stephanie Hollinger
Principal, Evergreen Forest Elementary,
North Thurston PS

“My wish from the genie is for all staff to know (and to feel everyday) how vital their role is. Regardless of title, the influence, impact, and inspiration remains. Case in point: these fine administrative assistants and counselor helping with attendance at our first fire drill. Safety first, building wide.”

Brendan Johnson
Principal/Athletic Director,
Asotin Senior High,
Asotin-Anatone SD



NEXT-LEVEL SUCCESS

Using Data to Do More for More Students



Brandon Byers

Assistant Principal,
Frontier MS,
Moses Lake SD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Planning with Data, Improving Instruction,
Closing the Gap*

Take 10 minutes and walk into programs around your school, taking note of who makes up the room.

Now go into your halls during passing or the cafeteria at lunch and compare your note to the reality in front of you. If you see the same thing we saw, you'll find the programs in place to give students opportunities to grow academically were only being accessed by a small portion of our school.

DIVING INTO DATA

This realization initiated our work. In the fall of 2017, we analyzed our demographic and program data to determine who was accessing our programs. After that, we identified the barriers, either in our school systems or in individual perceptions, that hindered students from enrolling in and receiving the program benefits. Our initial work looked at how our school programs had the power to overcome external factors outside a student's control.

For example, we found AVID students, on average, scored higher on the SBAC Math and ELA than not only their grade peers, but they also scored higher when compared to demographic peers (gender, race, and socioeconomic status). Our findings allowed us to celebrate

our programs that were positively impacting student achievement and ask why only certain students were participating in these beneficial programs. Working to identify school system barriers or student perceptual barriers that hindered access was critical to our journey.

ADDRESSING PROGRAM ENROLLMENT

While we looked at all the programs in our school, accelerated math was the first major area our process identified. As one may expect, students in these programs averaged higher scores on state math assessments and more frequently showed a high student growth level on the state's student growth percentile rating than their peers, both grade like and demographic. However, our data showed a disproportionately low number of students from low-SES households were enrolled in these math programs. This discovery caused us to change the way our students were enrolled into accelerated math programs. We created a system which placed students into accelerated math programs based upon quantifiable measures, like the NWEA and SBAC assessments.

This process contrasted our school's previous process, which was not as clearly identifiable by students, parents, or staff, but

instead was made up of a mixture of parent recommendation, teacher recommendation, and grades – all items with the potential to pass over students based upon factors that don't necessarily dictate whether a student has the ability mathematically to excel. We also added exit protocols, so if a student wanted to get out of the program, their parent had to sign off. The parents would have a conference with our school administration so they understood their child was placed into the program because of their ability, and to fully understand the overall impact the program could have on their student's education.

POSITIVE CHANGES

As of this fall, we've increased the number of students enrolled in accelerated math programs and have decreased the low-SES demographic gap in our accelerated math programs; all while still maintaining our scores and growth percentiles.

We are really proud of the results we're seeing, both in math and other programs. However, the biggest area of pride is how we continually analyze our school's program data, utilizing what we learn from it to ensure we are providing our students with the opportunity to grow and overcome factors outside their control. ■

RECOMMENDED READING

AWSP is partnering with Scholastic to bring you book recommendations related to school leadership and education. Here are this quarter's recommendations.



Find these books at scholastic.com/teachers

FOR EDUCATORS

Responsive Literacy: A Comprehensive Framework

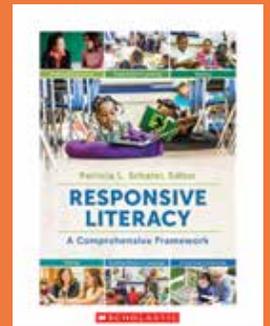
Edited by Patricia L. Scharer, with contributions from members of The Ohio State University Literacy Collaborative®

The book, edited by Patricia L. Scharer, is authored by educators affiliated with The Ohio State University Literacy Collaborative, many of whom are also Reading Recovery trained. They illuminate in precise detail high-quality classroom literacy instruction, individualized according to student needs, using the very best children's literature across a language and literacy framework. The book is organized around the six essential components of comprehensive literacy:

- Section One: Professional Learning
- Section Two: Organizing for Learning

- Section Three: Reading
- Section Four: Writing
- Section Five: Building Blocks of Language
- Section Six: A Learning Community: Students, Teachers, Principals, and Families

Throughout the six sections, you'll find the principles of learning and teaching that define comprehensive literacy.



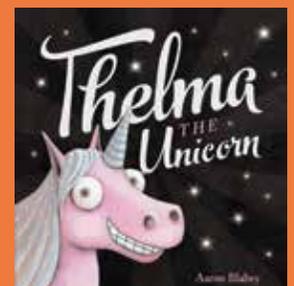
FOR STUDENTS

Thelma the Unicorn

By Aaron Blabey - Grades PreK-K

A pony wishes she were special. She wishes she was a unicorn. She gets her wish, and all the fame that comes with it. At first it is fun to be famous, but then Thelma misses just being Thelma the pony - being able to be with

her friends, with no crowds constantly after her. She abandons her unicorn guise and goes back to being herself.



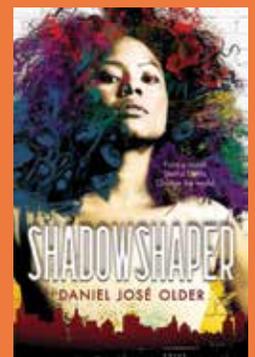
FOR STUDENTS

Shadowshaper

By Daniel Jose Older - Grades 9+

Paint a mural. Start a battle. Change the world. Sierra Santiago planned an easy summer of making art and hanging out with her friends. But then a corpse crashes the first party of the season. Her stroke-ridden grandfather starts apologizing over and over. And when the murals in her neighborhood begin to weep real tears... Well, something more sinister than the usual Brooklyn ruckus is going on. With the help of a fellow artist named Robbie, Sierra discovers shadowshaping, a thrilling magic that infuses ancestral spirits into paintings, music, and stories.

But someone is killing the shadowshapers one by one - and the killer believes Sierra is hiding their greatest secret. Now she must unravel her family's past, take down the killer in the present, and save the future of shadowshaping for generations to come. Full of a joyful, defiant spirit and writing as luscious as a Brooklyn summer night, Shadowshaper marks the YA debut of a bold new voice.



PSST! Want a chance to win one of these books, compliments of Scholastic? Send an email to webmaster@awsp.org with the word "reading" to be entered to win!



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Communication System
Engage parents & students

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<http://bit.ly/FreshGradeAWSP>



Let's have a deeper conversation about learning.

 freshgrade.com

PERIL in the PRINCIPALSHIP

Is Your Dream Job Becoming Your Nightmare?

Cindy Cromwell

Principal, Butler Acres Elementary, Kelso SD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety

I have aspired to be an educator

since I was in first grade. I knew from that young age that I was called to be a teacher! Every afternoon as a child, I would line up my stuffed animals to teach them a recap of my learning that day.

Entering MY first classroom as a teacher was a defining moment and a dream come true. After a few years of

teaching, I wanted to exchange that classroom key for a master key to open up the doors of an entire school and student body. Here I am, 19 years into my administrative career, and I have never been this worried about my profession and my fellow principals. And just like many other principals right now, I find myself wondering about my why, and my future?

Continued on page 14

'THE REALITY OF MY CAREER'

I've learned a lot in my time as a principal, and one of these things is that no one truly understands what it is like to be a principal, except for other principals. Over the last couple of years, our profession morphed into a job I doubt even retired principals would be able to recognize. Quite honestly, I would even go so far as to say our spouses don't even quite grasp our work, no matter how much we share or what they see.

Yes, they know the hours we work, and they see our passion to be everything to everyone 24 hours a day. My husband sees how tired I am, my tardiness or absence to our own kids' events. He knows our seats

have to be close to an outlet so I can charge my laptop during practices or performances to sneak in some work time. My children know when I finally get home, on many evenings I need a few minutes to just "be," where I don't have to make a decision, fix something, or respond to an electronic device.

I do not want my family to know about all of the room clears, calls for help, and restraints I am often involved with for prolonged periods of time. I don't want them to see all of my mental and physical bruising from dealing with staff, students, and parents. Sometimes, it's unavoidable.

For example, when my husband notices my tossing and turning after a rough day, he will ask "Do you want

to talk?" I usually respond "I'm good," as I sneak out of bed to write down more on my to do list or contemplate about strategies to support my staff and students. Other nights I can't hide it when he finds me dozing on the couch with my laptop open with a half written evaluation summary. He encourages me to finish up to get to sleep. Even though my husband tries, he doesn't quite get the reality of my career.

A CALLING

As principals, we are required to wear many different hats. We are the counselor, crime fighter, cheerleader, custodian, snack provider, substitute, playground/bus duty covering, morale boosting, disciplinarian, social working, nurse, schedule maker,



“The amount of on-the-fly decision making we do on a daily basis is extraordinary, even in comparison to an air traffic controller. And yet, we are expected to get it right all the time, all while improving test scores and student achievement.”

assessment coordinator, technology technician, transportation arranger, greeter, budgeter, safety officer, policy follower, attendance clerk, copy machine fixer, evaluator, instructional leader — all within the first hour of any school day.

This isn't even an exhaustive list.

The amount of on-the-fly decision making we do on a daily basis is extraordinary, even in comparison to an air traffic controller. And yet, we are expected to get it right all the time, all while improving test scores and student achievement. We have become firefighters responding to the intense demands of the job, and there's always an inferno around the corner.

We sacrifice our families, relationships, and life for a calling. But I don't think anyone besides a practicing principal understands how exhausted we are. Many in principal programs are deciding after completing their internship that becoming a principal just isn't worth it. I have heard many principals talk about going back to the classroom — fewer hours, less days to work, less stress, and more time with family. And what about the pay? I heard a principal share she barely makes more than her husband, who is a teacher with his National Board Certification and advises a couple of clubs and sports. When we heard her financial fact, most of us shook our heads as the reality of our choices sank in.

AT A CROSSROADS

None of us went into education for the money, and I for one celebrated joyfully when my teachers and instructional staff received a large,

very well deserved large pay increase last year. However, we principals, those who “make the big bucks,” did not. In fact, many teachers asked why anyone would want to continue as a principal when the teachers they supervise have such similar salaries.

I was visiting with a former principal who chose to return to the classroom as evaluations, test scores, and expectations drove her away from the principalship. I could not help but notice the spark many of us lose this time of year was alive and well in her. I asked about regrets regarding the move and she said, “Absolutely not, because I love my job again”.

As she walked away, I wondered how many principals still love their job? I pondered if I will look back in a couple of years and wish I had gone back in the classroom.

You see, it feels like the principalship is at the crossroads. More principals are questioning their decision to leave the classroom — thinking back to a simpler time when they could feel successful and manage their workload, personal, and family life. I know a lot of principals now thinking about either returning to the classroom or leaving education all together. The requirements to stay in the field are not for the faint of heart. This job has the ability to strain your relationships and quality of life.

IS GRIT ENOUGH?

As principals, we must use our voices to ensure people making decisions about educational policy and reform get it right and do what is best for our kids, rather than base their decisions on outdated views from their personal educational experience or unrealistic

expectations for all parties. The architecture of most school buildings remains identical over the last several decades, but the students, standards, and principal expectations have exponentially changed.

Even though I live in an amazingly supportive community and am surrounded by teams of professionals who are in this journey alongside me, I find myself reflecting on the lessons we teach our students about being resilient. All principals are having to dig deep, even when they think they have nothing left to give.

Will grit be enough to sustain us through these challenges? I am not sure. What I do know for sure is the private doubts many principals are wrestling with are much more common than ever before, and maybe there is comfort in knowing they are not alone.

“Continue to be resilient and know every day you show up to work, you make a positive difference in the lives of your students and families.”

Fellow principals (and when I say principals, I mean assistant principals too), I encourage you to use your voice to encourage the change that needs to happen. Our friends at AWSP will tell you to advocate for yourself and your profession, on behalf of all your students, to your community and your elected officials. If not for yourself and for your colleagues, do it future principals, or we might not have any. Continue to be resilient and know every day you show up to work, you make a positive difference in the lives of your students and families. ■

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SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

Walking the Journey **WITH DATA**

Using Numbers to Build Collegial Relationships, Student Success



Kim Doecker
Principal, Blue Ridge
Elementary,
Walla Walla PS

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

*Planning with Data, Creating a Culture,
Improving Instruction*

Decisions are made with data. Data drives instruction, and the numbers don't lie. These common statements during my tenure at Blue Ridge Elementary lead our work together as a staff, to increase student achievement and close the opportunity gap. We know as leaders that "In a healthy school culture, data is information, not condemnation" (Mohammad, 2013).

This article is the story of my journey over a decade as a school principal, beginning with building a healthy culture, to creating an environment where examining data was at the heart of what teachers discussed, and all the while maintaining my relationships with staff.

THE FOCAL POINT

A principal colleague of mine challenged me to write about my experience. My journey is one of the hills and many valleys that forced me to reflect, examine, change course, and persist. As a building leader, we all know too well that when the data is good, it is reflected within staff morale, culture, and the motivation to keep digging in when times get tough. And when the numbers are not good, the eroding culture, morale, and relationships can and do happen. Thus, my relationship with data as a building principal over the past 12 years made me stop, reflect, and refine practice.

Creating and sustaining a relationship with teachers with data as the focal point is not always easy. My journey with Blue

“ My journey is one of the hills and many valleys that forced me to reflect, examine, change course, and persist.”

Ridge teachers over the course of 10 years has not been easy. There have been some downright tough times, from being “on the list” in the era of NCLB; grappling with consistently “low achieving” staff turnover; and experiencing the decline of classroom sections and certificated staff. Not to say that colleagues in the area – or even around the state – did not face these same issues. We faced them as a staff to reboot and redefine who we were.

LOOKING AT DATA DIFFERENTLY

Blue Ridge Elementary has a 92 percent free- and reduced-lunch population, 122 of our 282 students are ELL, and 11.2 percent of students qualified for special education. Six years ago, I brought a team of teacher leaders and volunteer staff members together over the course of several months to examine our dual language program. Through discussions and consulting with dual language and reading experts from the University

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of Oregon, we decided collectively to discontinue our dual language program and focus on a one-way and English-only programming.

This was step one in looking at our school, students, and — yes — the data. A one-way immersion program means students who are native Spanish speakers receive instruction in their first language with the percentage of English instruction increasing each year, so by 5th-grade, students receive 50 percent English instruction and 50 percent Spanish instruction. Teachers felt settled and focused. They knew who would be in front of them and what they needed to do to meet their academic needs.

Consistency and stability were challenging in the first years. We had staff turnover and our data was still not yielding the results we wanted for our students. All we knew was, “Low achieving once again by state standards.” The all too familiar movie kept replaying staff working hard, collaborating on Wednesdays, talking about the curriculum – all of this was happening, but why were we not seeing the results? Needless to say, we didn’t want to look at data anymore. It was too painful and I still wanted to maintain relationships and morale.

Like many building leaders, I questioned my efforts and struggled to keep self-reflection positive. I asked myself, “If the scores weren’t going up yet, and teachers were working really hard, was the problem me; did I not have the skills to lead and close the gap?”

With the support of an education consulting group, we were able to put systems into place that not only helped us look at data in different ways, but caused us to meet regularly and discuss what was happening. Teachers were able to take a deeper dive into the standards, understanding them to point of writing exit tickets and common assessments.

“The reality is it takes time. Like most administrators, we want to jump in and go 0 to 60; our sense of urgency may not be mirrored in our staff. I learned it can’t be changed overnight.”

THE GOOD AND THE BAD

After the first years struggling to get everyone on the same page, teachers embraced looking at data, whether it is good or bad. It is a part of our conversations. We share the results of exit slips, common assessments, and iReady as a way to grow. Trust among teachers is strong. I know this because teachers are working at sharing students and putting interventions into place based on their common assessments. I am able to ask probing questions about the numbers and students without damaging relationships. Teachers are able to share instructional practices and receive advice from colleagues. The triangular relationship between the principal, teacher, and data is a foundational piece that has grown, continues to grow, and is sustainable regardless if I were to leave or team members change; this process of planning, assessing, and reflecting is embedded practice.

While this may sound utopian, there is still work to be done. I reflect on the past 10 years and cringe and think, “So much time was wasted. Why couldn’t I have gotten here sooner?” The reality is it takes time. Like most administrators, we want to jump in and go 0 to 60; our sense of urgency may not be mirrored in our staff. I learned it can’t be changed overnight. To get to the heart of improvement, you have to create and sustain those relationships with staff and yes, with the data! Data can be pretty or ugly, but you still have to grapple with it.

THE JOURNEY OF DATA

Finally, we’ve seen results. We met our five-year goal on the growth index set by our Board of Directors in one year, 96.3 percent of our

kindergarten students were in the green on iReady at the end of the school year, 95 percent of our Spanish speaking kindergarten students met the end of year Nonsense Word Fluency on the IDELS, our fourth grade students grew 27 percent on those meeting proficiency on the SBAC, and fifth-grade students grew 31 percent on those meeting proficiency on the SBAC. Those are a few of the highlights of our journey. What is not measured in numbers but goes without saying is the growth, conversations, and reflective discussions teachers engaged in throughout the school year. Their confidence and drive in the work they were doing was cemented and validated when students kept succeeding.

My journey walking with data is far from over. As a “seasoned” principal, I have learned a lot, made a lot of mistakes, but put pride on the shelf, reached out to others, shared the leadership, and kept relationships intact.

“My journey walking with data is far from over.”

As a building leader, we know our results are measured by the numbers – our data will yield both strengths and stretches. This journey of data is just that; not a destination to condemn, but rather a path to grow, learn and build stronger, collegial relationships that ultimately raise student achievement. ■

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

A Strategy to Diversify Schools



Srinivas Khedam, Ed.D

Assistant Principal, Lockwood Elementary, Northshore SD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Engaging the Community, Closing the Gap

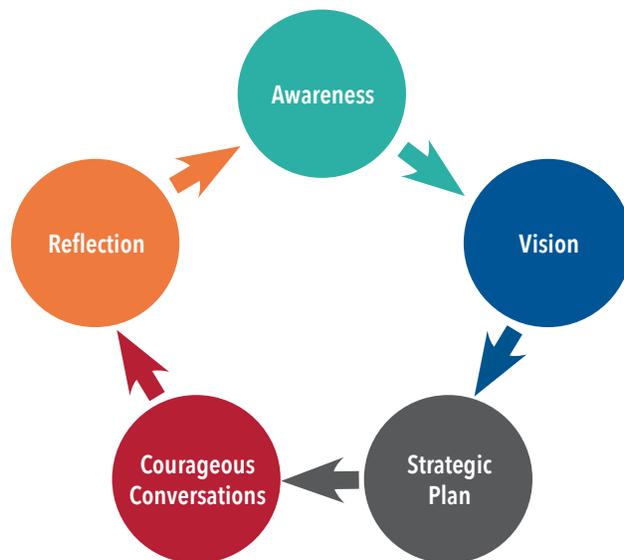
Lack of diverse teaching faculty in U.S. schools has been an issue for decades. Even though our communities became diverse in the last three decades, schools could not attract people of color to teaching. White teachers continue to dominate the teaching profession when compared to Blacks, Native Americans, Hispanics, and Asians.

According to a report from the U.S. Department of Education, the comparison between the 1987-88 school year and 2011-12 shows the percentage of white teachers decreased from 87 to 82 percent, Black teachers from 8 to 7 percent, Hispanic teachers grew from 3 to 8 percent, Asian teacher from 1 to 2 percent, and American Indian or Alaska Native teachers dropped from 1 percent to half percent (2016, p.6).

Studies show schools are taking steps to equip classrooms with diverse teachers. Unfortunately, there is not much progress yet. The needle isn't moving very far. One of the reasons is insufficient leadership capacity to invite, hire, and retain teachers of color into the classrooms. To address the problem, leaders at all levels must embrace a leadership style called Inclusive Leadership.

INCLUSIVE LEADERSHIP

I define inclusive leadership as a form of leadership in which leaders believe in inclusion, are aware of biases, value perspective of diverse members of a group, and make unbiased decisions with a goal of serving their constituents better. Inclusive leaders follow five steps: they are aware of biases, lead with vision, plan strategically, have courageous conversations, and thoughtfully reflect.



1. AWARENESS OF BIASES.

Human beings are biased by default. Intentionally or unintentionally, we show bias with our words, actions, and choices. Cultural, social, economical, gender, professional, political, religious, intellectual, emotional, and racial are just a few biases we commonly exhibit. People develop these biases due to the environment in which they were brought up, and exposure to cultures, traditions, misconceptions, and

lack of knowledge. Take a moment here and reflect on your biases towards people and political, social, religious, and other issues. I would be surprised if you can't identify a single bias.

Organizations are becoming more diverse and represented by people of different ethnicities, languages, cultures, and practices. Leaders make

decisions every day—decisions that impact individuals directly and indirectly. Many factors influence

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these decisions. In this regard, Scott (2013, p. 26) stated that “Biases include beliefs or extraneous factors that influence decision-making, often without the evaluator’s awareness.”

To be impartial and fair, leaders must be aware of all the factors that might influence their decisions, both positively and negatively. In this effort, leaders need to be sensitive to individuals’ perspectives, practices, beliefs, traditions, values, etc. while making decisions.

The #MeToo movement is a recent example of how people in power were insensitive to women, and their insensitivity impacted women’s lives significantly. The issues people of color face on daily basis as they work along with dominant cultures are similar to the issues women face while working with leaders who are not aware of biases and do not acknowledge them. Being unaware of biases and/or not acknowledging them is the biggest barrier to becoming an inclusive leader.

“Being unaware of biases and/or not acknowledging them is the biggest barrier to becoming an inclusive leader.”

2. VISION.

Any leader who is intentional about addressing challenges with diversity in our schools must make inclusiveness a part of their vision. As mentioned earlier, the statistics indicate very little progress has been made to improve the diversity in teaching faculty in the last 25 years, even though our communities are more diverse. Demographics continue to shift rapidly every year, yet the majority of students are taught by only a white teacher most or all of their K-12 education. Everything else in education—from teaching methodologies, student

“Enabling students to be inclusive-minded individuals is essential for creating inclusive culture in our institutions at all levels.”

growth, standardized testing, and more—have transformed, but the diversity of our educators has not. It becomes a huge issue!

Teacher diversity, and subsequently principal diversity, is not proportionate to the student population in the majority of our urban schools. Perhaps many leaders have been intentional about improving the diversity among teaching faculty; they may not have made it a part of their vision, and if they did, may not have approached the problem with a carefully planned strategy. On the other hand, some leaders might have had some partial success. Even where schools have had some success, it is unlikely these schools have broken the barrier of the disproportionate teacher and student ratio.

When school districts want to make a significant difference in an area, they include it in their vision. Integrating technology in classrooms, social-emotional curriculum, PBIS, and interactive learning are some aspects that are/were part of many school districts’ vision. Similarly, school districts must include inclusiveness as a part of their vision to balance the ethnic disproportion of teacher and student ratio.

3. STRATEGIC PLAN.

All school districts have strategic plans. However, very few school districts have an equity team or department to create equitable opportunities for all, or are focused on employing people of color in different capacities. Even if they have a team or department, we are not sure how effectively they are functioning to address the problem of diverse teaching faculty in their classrooms.

Inclusivity is a sensitive subject, complex, and still a new arena for

many leaders. Inclusivity should be part of the school district’s strategic plan. It should be a common thread connecting all the district’s and school’s goals, and it should be part of every decision made by the leaders at all levels. Inclusivity should become a mantra for all. In this effort, all employees should be committed to the concept of inclusivity by developing knowledge about the importance of inclusiveness, learning how to practice it through professional development, and intentionally practicing inclusivity all the time. These steps will encourage leaders to overcome implicit and explicit biases, make decisions with inclusive lenses on, and provide employment opportunities to diversify the population.

Furthermore, in the process of preparing students for a better future, they should be equipped with the knowledge of inclusiveness. Wherever possible, adults in all capacities should promote the concept of inclusiveness among students. This is part of building the capacity among the future leaders. Enabling students to be inclusive-minded individuals is essential for creating inclusive culture in our institutions at all levels.

4. CONVERSATIONS.

Conversations are crucial to develop deeper understanding of issues we face. Conversations help to understand the challenges we faced in technology, medicine, various fields of science, world cultures, religions, arts, music, etc. Conversations help improve the way we perceive, practice, live, and think. Great inventions and advancements in various fields of study are the result of powerful conversations. Conversations help people move out of their comfort zone.

Generally, people are hesitant to ask questions related to faith, dress, or culture and food for fear they might offend someone. However, people are rarely offended by genuine questions. Asking questions is a good beginning to meaningful conversations. Questioning leads to gaining knowledge, which in turn helps to find solutions to problems. It takes courage, honesty, openness, tolerance, and patience to begin meaningful conversations. If a question is asked appropriately with curiosity rather than being critical, people do not get offended.

“ If a question is asked appropriately with curiosity rather than being critical, people do not get offended.”

Leaders have a great responsibility to create an environment for courageous conversations about people, practices, traditions, problems, misconceptions, and all other issues that hinder progress. Courageous conversations have been instrumental to the success of organizations like as NASA, BMW, Apple, Microsoft, Amazon, and Starbucks. These organizations, and others, work closely with people around the world with different working styles, values, perspectives, attitudes, strengths, and weaknesses. Educational institutions have adopted leadership practices, management styles, organizational development strategies, and many other things from corporate sectors. Since these organizations found a way to make progress, why shouldn't schools adopt their approach to address the problem of diversity across school districts, and especially in classrooms?

One way schools and districts can make progress is to share with students that our society not only needs scientists, doctors, engineers,

“ As our communities become more diverse, smart leaders will have to become inclusive leaders.”

politicians, lawyers, but also inclusive leaders. We recognize students in science, technology, math, reading, writing, drama, and music on daily basis. In the same way, we need to recognize students who have the potential to be great teachers, especially students of color, and let them know they would be great teachers and inclusive leaders. This practice helps to build the capacity among students to become teachers and inclusive leaders.

5. REFLECTION.

Successful organizations reflect on their work constantly, make necessary changes as needed, and progress continuously. Inclusiveness is a huge task, and many organizations are still in the learning stage. As people, we have so much to learn from each other's culture, practices, and beliefs. It takes an intentional effort to understand other cultures. To make organizations inclusive places, leaders must create a culture of reflection on their work, evaluate their actions, and build on the progress already made to move to the next level.

Continuous reflection with an intention of making progress helps us to get better at learning about each other. In the 21st century, organizations must be bold to bring inclusiveness to the front burner as one of the top priorities. Only bold actions can make our workplaces equitable for all. To make a better workplace for all, organizations must honor and provide equitable opportunities for all, without implicit and explicit biases. Inclusiveness with intentionality is a powerful means to bridge the gap between the disproportionality that exists in communities and the employment in organizations.

We know students can be what they can see, which is why it's important

for students to see successful people who look like they look and share their same culture. Inclusiveness becomes more meaningful and powerful when it is spread from lowest level to the top most level of employment in organizations. Not only do we need to diversify the teaching force, but school leadership must shift to reflect our communities as well. Until it is accomplished, Dr. King's dream, and the dreams of people who believe in equality, will continue to be just that...a dream.

CONCLUSION

Inclusiveness is an essential aspect to creating better work and living environments for everyone on this planet. Communities and organizations who value inclusiveness benefit from it significantly. With inclusiveness, highly talented individuals with different learning styles, attitudes, approaches, strategies, and perspectives will join organizations in different capacities and create significant impacts. As our communities become more diverse, smart leaders will have to become inclusive leaders. Just like other leadership styles from the past, inclusive leadership is another leadership style leaders must embrace to better serve their communities. ■

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[highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf](https://www2.ed.gov/rschstat/eval/highered/racial-diversity/state-racial-diversity-workforce.pdf)

Finish **STRONG!**

The principalship is both a marathon and a sprint. The key is pacing yourself.

Gina Yonts

*Associate Director,
Eastern Washington, AWSP*

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture



The intensity of spring and all its beauty is alive and well in our state. This is especially noticeable if you are an administrator working in one of Washington's public schools.

This time of year for a school administrator, is even more intense as there is much to accomplish before the end of the school year: state testing, teacher evaluation, hiring of new staff, spring sports, volunteer appreciation festivities, livestock shows and multiple graduation ceremonies. How does the busy principal, wearing many hats in rural districts throughout Eastern Washington, make it from spring break to June 15?

“ We plan to start our year strong and then ‘life happens.’ Are you planning to finish strong?”

If you find yourself gearing up for spring and feeling already behind or exhausted, read on for some ideas and reminders that might come in handy.

HAVING A PLAN

Brainstorm the list of to do's. It all seems overwhelming, but if you can make a master list, break it down into small chunks, you'll have the opportunity to organize the work into manageable parts. Once your list is complete, separate the tasks into the following quadrants:

Easy: High	Hard: High
Easy: Low	Hard: Low

The left hand column, allows you to identify the tasks that are easier to accomplish and have a lower or high payoff. The right hand column, allows you to identify tasks that are more challenging to accomplish, and have different payoffs. (Hint: avoid the Hard:Low quadrant if at all possible!) This tool is to help you organize your tasks and to ask for help in keeping you on track.

BACKWARDS MAP

You've now created a to-do list that probably seems a little overwhelming. Take a deep breath and start putting things into the calendar, assigning some soft due dates for yourself. Just getting things on the calendar will help you to stay focused. Not to mention each week as you complete things on your list—keep track of

your progress. Nothing breeds success like success! Build in time to reflect daily and move things forward if for some reason you were not able to accomplish a task you assigned yourself. Tomorrow is a new day!

ASK FOR HELP

In principal training, we are rarely taught how to work with and use our administrative assistant to help keep us on track of our work. The administrative assistants wears many hats, but their primary task is to help YOU to be successful. Plan to meet regularly (weekly) with your secretary to insure you are keeping up on your plan and staying on track. The administrative assistant can be an amazing ally to fending off distractions and allowing you to stay on target with your spring work plan.

STAYING HEALTHY

Nothing kills a well thought-out plan like getting sick. Are you eating breakfast each morning? Drinking water? How about ensuring that you take the time (yes, I said it!) to eat lunch? How about exercising or at least insuring you get outside to breathe fresh air each day? (Walking to and from your car doesn't count!).

We plan to start our year strong and then “life happens.” Are you planning to finish strong? Taking care of you is very important and at this time of year —not something you can take for granted. Ready or not, June 15 will be here before you know it. Staying healthy, having a plan, relying on key team members to help keep you focused, you'll find yourself at summer's door in no time! ■

LEADERSHIP LESSONS

*Choosing Courage and
Positivity when the
Unthinkable Happens*

Dr. Charlotte Stingley-Ellis

*Principal on Special Assignment,
Pasco SD*

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Improving Instruction



FROM GEORGIE (THE DOG) AND WALDO (MY BRAIN TUMOR)

As school leaders, we attend “principal school” where we learn to research best practices and the needed characteristics to become an impactful leader within our organization. This shared experience allows us to collaborate with each other on developing instructional visions, managing budgets, and tending to the daily responsibilities associated with our positions. Being a principal becomes our identity and life – we are an administrator, we are the leader, we shape and mold the lives of hundreds of students. This is our moral purpose.

But what if you suddenly couldn’t be a principal or a leader and all of those leadership lessons you have gleaned over the years were gone, and you were left just being you? This idea is scary and unimaginable – until it happens.

A NEW REALITY

The date was Oct. 17, 2016, and the unthinkable happened to me. Within minutes I lost the ability to talk, walk, and even think clearly. I was just beginning my third year as a middle school principal. I was so honored to be the principal at my alma mater, Stevens Middle School in Pasco.

I loved all the aspects of my position and particularly all the crazy that surrounds middle school students. I had also just begun my second year of a three-year doctorate program through UW. My family was well, my two sons were doing amazing, and reflecting back now my life was

“The date was Oct. 17, 2016, and the unthinkable happened to me. Within minutes I lost the ability to talk, walk, and even think clearly.”

really blessed. Then in a flash, all that I knew, all that I believed was true, was gone and I was left with the idea that I would never be me again – my life would forever be changed.

At the age of 43, I experienced at the time what doctors determined was a stroke. Then the doctors examined the CAT scans more intentionally and found the root cause of my symptoms: a tumor, a brain tumor, a tumor in my brain. I still have to say it different ways to fully accept my new reality. The upside to finding the tumor was that the original diagnoses of a stroke was re-coded to a seizure, one which interrupted the multiple functions of the brain, including my ability to walk, talk, think clearly and – more devastating – my ability to be a principal.

This addition to my brain, which we now affectionately call “Waldo,” became the sole focus of my life. Over the next months I began to recover from the initial seizure, recapturing my ability walk, talk, and think with clarity. Finally, after a couple of months of rehab, I was released to return to work. I was free to return to my calling; I was going to lead again.

Unfortunately, my return to the principalship was short-lived. I continued to have seizures and at the end of March, I experienced a particularly significant seizure that put me back into the hospital where the doctors reviewed the size of the tumor. Yep, Waldo had grown. He was

continuing to occupy more space in my brain, thus causing more intensive seizures. I was going to have to seek a different approach to address the seizures as we continued to monitor Waldo and hoped he would stop growing.

The new medication required another leave from my role as a principal. This time I did not take the news very well. Sadness and despair took over my thoughts. I am a leader, I am a principal, I lead and shape the lives of hundreds of students. I was confident those who were now leading the building were more than qualified and would continue to support and put the needs of students first, but I wouldn’t be there to see the growth and celebrate the students. My identity was gone and I feared I would forget how to lead. I would no longer be who I was.

ME, GEORGIE & WALDO

The first three days of my second medical leave were tough. I spent the days eating my feelings, watching “Grey’s Anatomy” episodes, looking for a quick fix for my situation. Then I would sleep, a lot. On the third day of this pity party my two amazing sons came home from school and engaged in a hard conversation with me as I laid in my bed with an empty bag of cookies and chips next to me. They gently but clearly told me that I had to get up, I had to shower, and – most importantly – I had to get out of

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the sweats and t-shirt that I had be wearing for at least three days. I cried and agreed to get out of bed, shower, and even cook dinner.

I realized that Waldo had taken control. He was dictating my every move and impacting the quality of my children's life. I was committed to shifting my perspectives. I had some good ideas as to how to do this, and – to my surprise – so did my kids. Their idea: I needed a dog.

We all know that any pet requires work, and I was not in a place to take care of myself, let alone a pet. However, those stubborn children continued to push, looking on different websites until they found

“ But to my amazement, soon after Georgie's arrival, we became inseparable. We established our routine. We would walk at 8 a.m., 12 p.m., and 6 p.m., and of course take a few naps throughout the day.”

the perfect dog at our local Humane Society. I agreed to go look at the ragtag dog, who had the saddest face, whose coat was mangled and dirty, and I could tell his spirit was broken. As soon as I saw this dog locked in a chain-link pen, I connected with him immediately. I looked into his eyes and I saw a reflection of myself; this dog and I were the feeling the same way, both searching for someone to help them change their current reality. We took the dog home, changed his name to Georgie, and that is where my new journey into leadership began.

I had been a leader, I had been smart, I had been effective, and now I was the sad woman with a brain tumor who adopted a rescue dog. But to my amazement, soon after Georgie's arrival, we became inseparable. We established our routine. We would walk at 8 a.m., 12 p.m., and 6 p.m., and of course take a few naps throughout the day. The days became weeks, and as my mind became clearer I really started to think about my leadership practices and how different I would be if I could just get back to being a principal.





I reopened leadership books I had read in the past, looked online, and talked with my doctoral colleagues. All of these sources were filled with great research and approaches, but I struggled with how to connect all of that knowledge to my current reality. It was just me, Georgie, and Waldo every day hanging out, but I also had this feeling Georgie had something to say. Then one morning, Georgie finally spoke and schooled me on three incredible leadership lessons.

1. SOMETIMES YOU LEAD, SOMETIMES YOU FOLLOW

As principals, we are handed keys to the building and told to go lead, go create, raise those test scores, and keep things off of the superintendent's desk. It is easy for a principal to carry all of these responsibilities alone, especially if you are new. Remember, we are the ones who went to school to become a principal. We applied and accepted the position. People are expecting us to have the answers and when we don't, we have the feeling of inadequacy and doubt in our abilities. (Raise your hand if you have ever doubted that you are a good principal – yep, me too.)

I was pondering this very thought one day as Georgie and I were on our morning walk. As a Type A

person, which many of us principals are, I planned out our daily walking routines almost down to the minute. This day was no different. However, at the point we were to make the traditional right turn to go home, Georgie sat down on the curb and refused to move. I tugged at his leash a time or two. He still refused to move. I went over, got eye-to-eye, and negotiated with him. No movement. I then tried the aggressive stance and words. Still no movement. I finally gave in, having to rely on the trust between us and agreed to turn left.

I was pissed.

I was the leader, and I knew where I was going and this route was uncharted. I didn't know where the landmines of other dogs may be. I was unsure of the roads and worried we would get lost. These thoughts slowly faded away as I was captivated by the landscape of a park that was around the corner. I had lived in my house for years and didn't know there was a park that close. Georgie began to run and jump. He sniffed all the trees and had excitement in his eyes and his tail would not stop wagging.

That day I relearned a basic leadership approach: sometimes you lead, and sometimes you follow. That moment on the corner, I employed a number of leadership moves trying

“ ... I wonder how many times we have left staff on the corner, simply because we didn't understand what they were trying teach us.”

to get Georgie to follow me home. My last option, in my perspective, would have been to simply leave him behind. I would not do that, but I wonder how many times we have left staff on the corner, simply because we didn't understand what they were trying teach us. For months, Georgie let me lead the walks; he trusted me that I would get us home safely. Once that trust was built with him, he needed me to trust him. When I did, I experienced and discovered an entirely different part of the neighborhood, filled with new perspectives and people.

Connect that to your school. What if you built trust with someone who has different viewpoints than you and together you took a walk through your building or the neighborhood around your school? What would the two of you see differently that could influence the development of your school's vision and be a true

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representation of where the school is going? This would put you in a very vulnerable situation and demonstrate an act of courage – but you didn’t take this position because you are wimpy. And besides, Georgie would say, “If you are leading with just your perspective, you are really just walking alone.”

2. WHO’S COACHING WHOM?

A few months into becoming Georgie’s mom, I began to see the adage of “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” is accurate. Georgie was potty trained when we adopted him, but beyond that, his ability to listen and follow direction was limited. I tried watching online videos to help me coach him into being a friendlier dog towards strangers or coming back home when he wiggled off the leash. However, my skills were inferior to what Georgie needed. The moment I knew I was in real trouble was when I couldn’t find anyone willing to dog sit when I had to travel to Seattle for class at UW because he was “naughty.”

“ I cannot always clean up situations by myself. I need help and support. I need to seek out individuals who can approach situations with different skills and work together to solve problems of practice in service of our students.”

Inadvertently, Georgie was teaching me another leadership lesson: When you need support and help, swallow your pride and ask for help. I accepted that all my coursework and degrees were no match for Georgie and his special training needs. I located our local dog whisperer, Steve, and I assumed we would focus on what Georgie needed to relearn to obey my commands. Well, I was wrong. The coaching was designed for me.

I was confused for a while, but as I took Steve’s coaching and put the lessons into action, I began leading Georgie with my newly acquired tools. His behavior changed. Steve explained that Georgie responds to my tone and tenor, the level of consistency with which I employ expectations, and my emotions. Groundbreaking ideas! No, not really, but they are ones that are easily forgotten in the frenzy of everyday life. Whatever the leader brings into the room, conversation, or meeting sets the tone and parameters for others’ behavior. I needed to be coached to relearn that concept.

Thankfully Steve and Georgie were up for the task.

As educational leaders, we all have valuable perspectives to share and all want to contribute to the growth of others. Asking for someone to coach you is humbling and opens you up to being vulnerable. You may not always like what they say – I know I don’t, but there is wisdom in experience. And, coaching isn’t just a one-way relationship. I have taught my coaches a couple of things around building equitable systems and recent research and how to program their smartphone.

When do you know you need coaching? With Georgie, I waited too long. I allowed the naughty behavior to continue way past my gut telling me I needed help. In hindsight I would have begun the first day he struggled with communicating and I could see it was going to be a tough road. Principal coaching is



no different. Having someone coach you through your thoughts and actions before you engage is considerably more effective than them coaching you out of a potential mess. As one of my coaches tells me, “That bell has already rung, you cannot unring it.” I long thought that having someone “coach” me meant that I was inadequate or not qualified for the position. I learned quickly that all parties benefit when we are humble enough to ask for help.

3. SOMETIMES YOU NEED HELP CLEANING UP THE MESS

Principaling is hard work and is a profession where you are out front all the time. People are constantly watching your every move, judging, and at times waiting for you to fail. With this pressure comes the desire to never make a mistake and when we do, oftentimes we hurry to try and fix it, hoping no one sees or knows that we are not perfect. I was one of those leaders.

I felt the pressure to be perfect and to run the building with each leadership move precisely planned, to avoid making a mess. As you can guess I didn’t always achieve this goal, and when I did mess up, I sought to rewind the experience, to cover it up alone in the safety of my office.

My thinking shifted one afternoon when my new medication took control of my actions. The dosage of the medication had some interesting side effects, including mood swings. At any given time, I could lose my mind, and then one day it happened to a degree never witnessed before. I wanted a milkshake, a good old fashioned chocolate milkshake. So I loaded up Georgie and we drove to our local McDonald’s and got a



large creamy chocolate milkshake with whipped cream on top. Joy was in my heart, I was so proud of my milkshake. Then the unthinkable happened. As I walked into the kitchen, the milkshake slipped from my hands and landed in a huge chocolate puddle all over the floor. Tears flowed, followed by anger which took over my heart.

Why would this happen – I deserved this milkshake. I planned for the milkshake, I correctly ordered the milkshake. Ugggh ...WHY? I walked away from the kitchen, deciding I was not going to address the mess on the floor. Yes I created the mess, but I didn’t want to clean it up. Then I saw Georgie beginning to clean it up, in his own doggie way. As I watched him clean up my problem of the spilt milkshake, I grabbed paper towels and together, using different approaches, we conquered the milkshake disaster. The lesson embedded in the Great Milkshake Fail is that as a leader, I cannot always clean up situations by myself. I need help and support. I need to seek out individuals who can approach situations with different skills and work together to solve problems of practice in service of our students.

Georgie used his skills and I used mine; moments later the floor was clean and we were in the car, on our way to try again. The funny thing is this lesson continued throughout the day. As we took our last evening walk, Georgie made a mess. And as he tried to clean it up by kicking grass over it, the mess was still there. As I took

the lead, using the poop bag and to clean up his mess, I giggled, thinking we were even for the day. Two messes, cleaned up in different ways, but both done together.

FINDING THE LESSONS WITHIN THE RUBBLE

The first day in the hospital, I never thought I would be thankful for having a brain tumor and that Waldo would have such a positive impact on my educational journey. Georgie and Waldo have continued to provide me with opportunities to learn and grow that I could not have even imagined. Life is full of defining moments and finding Waldo was no exception.

“ Every day is a new adventure and I am honored to be a part of an amazing community who serves selflessly for our children.”

Many times I have fallen to my knees and asked, “Why me?” But then Georgie finds me, licks my face, and reminds me of the greater purpose. Waldo and Georgie have both created situations where my only option has been to choose courage, to choose positivity, and to find the lessons within the rubble. Using this strength and that of my family and friends, I was able to complete my doctorate degree with my cohort family, and even plan a wedding!

Every day is a new adventure and I am honored to be a part of an amazing community who serves selflessly for our children. ■

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AWSL: An Organizational and Individual JOURNEY IN EQUITY

Susan Fortin

Student Leadership Director, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Improving Instruction, Engaging Communities, Closing the Gap

AWSP clearly shared the vision and presented the challenge when, as an organization, it declared its top priority in the current strategic plan: “Support **all** students in our state by tackling historical inequities in our P-16 system.”

With “Equity, Opportunity and Access” as our mantra, AWSL committed to examining all of our programs and practices to better meet the needs of all students. In taking on this

organizational challenge, we reached out to schools to ask them to assess their structures and practices in the realm of student leadership. Once we started the conversation on how to shift our organizational practices, it became clear that this journey to equity also requires a personal journey. Working side by side with administrators, activity advisers and leadership teachers we collectively tackled the Heart and Head work involved in equity. Here’s where our one-year journey has taken us.

Continued on page 34



AWSL's Equity and Access Task Force.

ORGANIZATIONAL INITIATIVES

MARCH 2018 – AWSL staff Susan Fortin, Joe Fenbert and James Layman taught a three-hour preconference session at the Washington Activity Coordinators Association (WACA) conference. The session, “Student Leadership through an Equity Lens,” challenged the 30 participants to assess the current practices of their student leadership programs.

MAY 2018 – Our “Getting Started” document launched in our e-newsletter, “In the Loop,” challenged schools to look at their systems and structures. AWSL made a commitment to include an equity feature in all future issues. AWSL staff attended the AWSP/WASA/WSSDA Equity Summit to deepen our own learning.

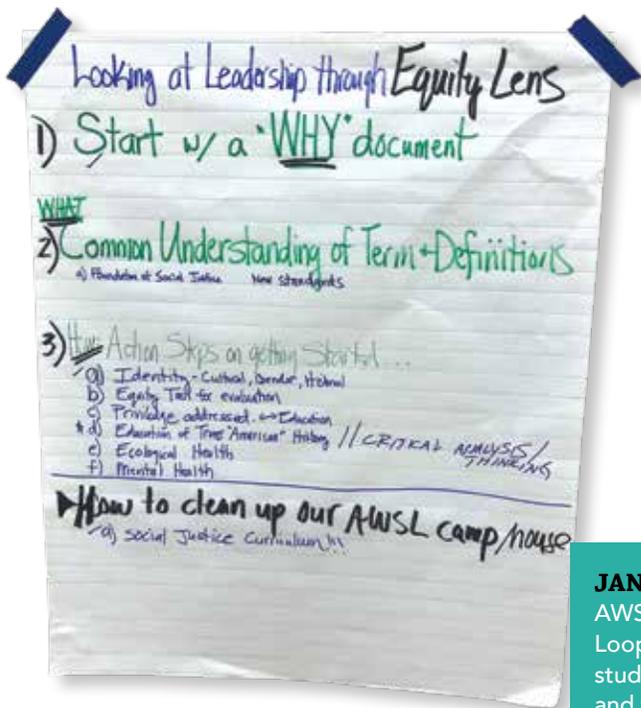
OCTOBER 2018 – Demographic data was collected at AWSL Fall Conference. We wondered going in, compared to summer camp, was this program more accessible to a diverse group given lower registration fees and less of a time commitment?

APRIL 2018 – Sparked by conversations at WACA we discovered that examining leadership programs through a lens of equity was a new concept to most schools. Our work would require a commitment of time and resources. We gathered a few interested administrators and activity coordinators to create a roadmap for our work, informally titled, “WACA to WACA—What difference can we make in one year?”

SUMMER 2018 – We gathered demographic data on students and staff involved in our summer leadership programs for the first time. This was an important first step for us to examine who we serve, who is missing and why. AWSL also launched our first Native American Leadership Camp at Chewelah Peak to better serve the needs of Native youth in a culturally responsive setting.



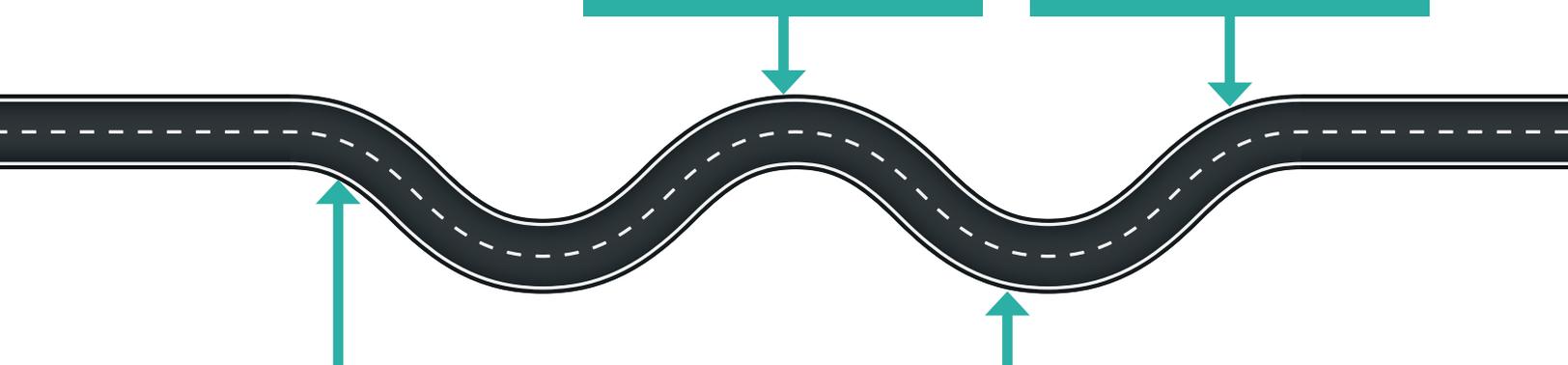
AWSL 2018-19 Student Voice and Advocacy Board



Some ideas from the Equity and Access Task Force's work.

JANUARY 2019 – Launched the AWSL Equity Journey in “In the Loop” — Challenging adults and students to explore their stories and focus on the Heart work on equity.

MARCH 2019 – AWSL Diversity Task Force reconvened at Cispus. The group focused on final revisions to our earlier work while also diving more deeply into our own personal equity journeys. As a group we realized this is a journey on a bumpy road with unexpected curves. We worked through some awkward and uncomfortable conversations and committed to the hard work. We agreed that we will stumble again — which is better than being afraid to take the journey at all.



NOVEMBER 2018 – AWSL Diversity Task Force gathered at Cispus for a three-day work session. Outcomes included:

- A revision of our AWSL belief statement
- Existing goals and objectives written to align with Washington State Social Emotional Learning Standards with strengthened ties to the AWSP Leadership Framework
- Refreshed tools for project planning and evaluation created using equity as a measure of success
- Analysis of demographic data gathered in programs with discoveries and wonderings that were shared with camp directors.

FEBRUARY 2019 – Invited 12 students of color who had served as peer mentors in our programs to AWSP/AWSL sponsored Future Leaders/Educators Day. Student program focused on encouraging teaching as a profession. Also, in February the newly formed AWSL Alumni and Friends group funded camp sponsorship for four underserved schools for summer 2019.



Logo for AWSL's annual Fall Leadership Conference: Unity Starts with You.

Continued on page 34

PERSONAL AND LOCAL INITIATIVES REFLECTED BY WORK OF MEMBERS OF THE AWSL DIVERSITY TASK FORCE

Students at **Renton HS**, Renton SD, have engaged in thoughtful deliberation and as a result have rewritten the ASB Constitution from scratch to ensure equity, better representation and diversity of student voice. Renton activity coordinator Christy Neuschwander helped her students with their efforts. Additionally, student leaders at **Kent-Meridian**, **Sammamish** and **Shorecrest** have also used OSPI School Report Card demographic data to analyze leadership involvement in their schools. Each are assessing barriers to access, and some are rewriting constitutions and election processes to provide more authentic leadership opportunities for all students.

Kent-Meridian HS, Kent SD, under the adult leadership of ASB Adviser Leigh Barry, hosted the AWSL Conference in October. The successful conference-wide service project partnered with Mary's Place Seattle, focusing on the needs of youth who are without secure housing. Students learned that homeless persons of color do not have access to needed hair care products, which are different than products needed for European hair (and what is most commonly donated). In addition, when homeless persons gain access to housing, food stamp programs do not cover cleaning or laundry supplies. The goal was to promote dignity for ALL by providing equitable access to these products.

Megan Baxter, **Union HS**, Evergreen SD, has added topics of Micro Aggressions and Implicit Bias to her leadership class curriculum. They have also begun building-level conversations regarding race, discrimination and intimidation. Additionally, she has been working

on district-wide efforts to promote leadership opportunities for all students through advisories, mentoring and new social emotional curriculum.

Anecia Grigsby, Assistant Principal **Sammamish HS**, Bellevue SD, a voracious reader and former Language Arts teacher has tackled 15 equity focused books so far this school year. Her reading list includes:

EIGHT TOP RECOMMENDATIONS

- **"White Fragility: Why It's So Hard for White People to Talk about Racism,"** Robin DiAngelo
- **"Tears We Cannot Stop,"** Michael Eric Dyson
- **"Just Mercy: A Story of Justice and Redemption,"** Bryan Stevenson
- **"Evicted: Poverty and Profit in the American City,"** Matthew Desmond
- **"Pushout: The Criminalization of Black Girls in Schools,"** Monique W. Morris
- **"Waking Up White: And Finding Myself in the Story of Race,"** Debby Irving
- **"What Truth Sounds Like,"** Michael Eric Dyson
- **"Rising Out of Hatred: The Awakening of a Former White Nationalist,"** Eli Saslow

SEVEN ADDITIONAL IMPORTANT BOOKS

- **"Ghetto: The Invention of a Place, the History of an Idea,"** Mitchell Duneier
- **"From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America,"** Elizabeth Hinton
- **"White Trash: The 400-Year Untold History of Class in America,"** Nancy Isenberg

- **"The Color of Law: A Forgotten History of How Our Government Segregated America,"** Richard Rothstein
- **"Defining Moments in Black History: Reading Between the Lies,"** Dick Gregory
- **"White Like Me: Reflections on Race from a Privileged Son,"** Tim Wise
- **"Things That Make White People Uncomfortable,"** Dave Zirin and Michael Bennett

Wenatchee HS, Wenatchee SD, hosted "I AM - WE ARE," an AWSL one-day regional student leadership workshop focused on exploring one's identity, story and aspirations while strengthening relationships with peers. Facilitated by James Layman the session brought together over 100 students from the region. Molly Butler, Student Support Specialist at Wenatchee coordinated the event. She cast a wide net and personally invited 50 Wenatchee students representing all demographics and social groups. Outside of the standard definition of Student Leader at their school, these students had a leadership experience that developed assets and formed deeper school-wide connections.

Randy Heath, former principal, current AWSL middle level camp director and executive director for **Student and Family Support Services** for Kent SD led his department through a book study using Dr. Robin DiAngelo's "White Fragility."

Fernell Miller, teacher at **Arrowhead Elementary**, Northshore SD, worked to create off-campus, afterschool gathering spaces for students through her initiative, Let's BGINN (Black Girls/Guys in Northshore Network). Fernell reminds us, "We have to start somewhere!"

“ Our goal for the future would be that equity is not an add-on, it’s just the way we do business.”

Johanna Phillips, **Shorecrest HS**, rewrote Leadership class project tools to include an equity focus for planning and evaluating. A self-guided Equity Audit created the conditions for Shorecrest student leaders to assess and update traditional activities, removing barriers based on gender and gender identity.

The **Sammamish HS** community engaged in the American History Travelling Museum in order to further their growth and conversations around racial equity. Social Studies teachers altered their schedules to take their students through the exhibit with time provided for reflection and discussion. The staff also experienced the exhibit and engaged in community circles to discuss their thoughts and feelings. Assistant Principal Anecia Grigsby added, “It was a very positive and needed experience for our school.”



Our equity focus influenced our AWSL Fall Leadership Conference theme and schedule. Local agencies share their mission and teach ways to assist affinity groups.

IN CLOSING

From WACA to WACA—What difference can we make in one year? In 2019, WACA added a full equity strand to their program and AWSL was able to recruit sessions based on the work of our equity task force. Nine workshop sessions and five meet-the-pro table talks were directly related to new initiatives in schools that are opening the doors of opportunity and access for all students.

Our goal for the future would be that equity is not an add-on, it’s just the way we do business. We challenge you to look inside – both personally and organizationally to see where a year of reflection and work on your own Equity Journey can take you. ■

A group team building activities is to find a way to get the entire council across the creek on a cargo net.



WHAT'S SUMMER WITHOUT SUMMER CAMPS?

Martin E. Fortin, Jr.

Director of Learning Centers, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Engaging Communities, Improving Instruction, Closing the Gap

I attended leadership camp at the Cispus Learning Center in July of 1970. It was truly an unforgettable learning experience that shaped my future career choice as an educator. As a teacher, I returned many times with students, or for adult science courses.

When the opportunity came in 1991 to return and work at Cispus, I did not hesitate to apply. As a result of my 28 years of working for AWSP, I have grown professionally in many ways. I still feel the wonder of leadership camp as I work with the Mt. Baker leadership camp each summer.

Forty-nine years later, I still wonder if today's students have the same experience when they attend leadership camp at Cispus. This winter I asked, and here is what I learned.

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Forty-nine years later, I still wonder if today's students have the same experience when they attend leadership camp at Cispus. This winter I asked, and here is what I learned.

“ When I am asked about leadership camp, a million things come to mind. I've attended camp for two years and have had the privilege to meet more than 100 other students from around the state. In just seven days, you learn things like how to run an assembly, how to lead a large group activity or event, how to create successful committees, and really just how to put yourself out there to the world. Leadership camp has helped me become a driven, motivated leader, and taught me to be myself, no matter the circumstance. Leadership camp helps you understand the value of students' opinions in your school and how to create a culture staff and students want to be in. From working with the staff to getting to know our peers, I learned everyone matters in a school environment. At camp, you learn the importance of compassion for the students around you. The lessons I learned helped my

Executive Council understand the need to help those around us. We have provided meals, clothes, and money to our students' families. Leadership camp has opened doors and taught us values we use every day. I will be able to utilize all the things I learned at camp throughout my life.”

Tawnya Rose
Kiona-Benton City HS

“ I have been given the rare opportunity to attend summer leadership camp for two years. For me, this camp has inspired me to be the best leader I can be. It has inspired me to be exposed to all perspectives of leadership and that everyone, no matter the circumstance, can be a leader. This camp has granted me a new form of confidence and has taught me how to apply my natural strengths back at my home high school. All thanks to this camp and the confidence I have gained, I have been able to successfully manage and plan various school wide events that have made a difference at my home high school”

Sarah Stewart
Richland HS

“ Leadership camp is utter magic. Sunshine not only beams on us, but also through us, around us, and between us. Every kid at the camp had a smile on their face because of one feeling: they



A camp-wide goal is to get every delegate on stage sometime during the week.

felt like they belong. By the end of the first day at camp I knew the people here and the feeling I felt was something that needed to be at my school, Southridge High. As Southridge's slogan is, "Home of the Suns," it seemed only fitting to fill our halls with the sunshine we felt from camp. Walking onto leadership camp soil, I knew no one besides my friends, but the upbeat energy surrounding all of us led to friendliness, positivity, and ultimate happiness, even between strangers. Every kid at this camp always had a place to belong and that was made very clear by the camp's leaders. This upbeat energy is something I, along with my fellow school leaders, strive to bring to Southridge every day. Some efforts made by Southridge leadership to make sure every student feels that they belong are constant notes of encouragement and daily greeting as they walk in. Everybody deserves to feel like they have a place to belong in this world. Although this is a seemingly instinctive idea, creating an environment to appease every student's need to belong is not an easy task. But with the help of leadership camp, teen leaders are equipped with the most important lesson a leader can learn: how to use your happiness to make others feel welcome.

Emilie Shipley
Southridge HS



Camps extensively use the Cispus Challenge Course to enhance team development.

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“ My life has been heavily influenced by leadership classes, students and teachers. But never in my life have I been touched by more souls than when I stepped off the bus onto Cispus Learning Center grounds to attend Mt. Baker Leadership Camp. Every single person you see has your best interests in mind. Their hearts get filled by making others smile, so all you see when you look around is laughter and friendships forming. Friendships are made from across the state. I keep in contact with my cabin and we all message each other to seek help with life issues, spiritual battles, or just common high school/ASB problems. Being given the ability to exchange ideas, purposes, and “whys” is the most beautiful gift. I’ve never felt more needed, wanted, or appreciated than when I am surrounded by 300 caring, amazing people at leadership camp. Mt. Baker Leadership camp has truly given me a second chance at life. Through my short 16 years on this earth, I’ve felt lonely, unwanted and useless, but once I see my camp friends or remember the JC and SCs, all is alright. I walk through each day with an open heart and a positive view on my school because of my camp experience. The days I’ve spent at Mt. Baker have been the best days of my life.

Elena Breiner
Bonney Lake HS

“ The environment and the people are two of the most notable pieces that make camp “Leadership Camp.” A place where everyone feels accepted, a place where barriers that people build for themselves seem much easier to lower. My first year Junior Counselor told me something that changed the way I look at life. She told me that I’m a fire, that I



A long held tradition is to challenge each group to develop a popular song tune with new lyrics that show what they have learned at camp and perform it at Song Fest.

shouldn’t be ashamed to say what I want to say and be who I want to be. My second year JC told me something that made me look at myself differently. He told me that being myself unapologetically is something that inspires people around me to be who they are, too. Since camp, I strive to be true to myself so I can encourage others to be happy with themselves. I compliment people every day so people at CHS can have the jolts of happiness and joy that people at Cispus made me feel.

Isac Cantu Gonzalez
*2-year delegate,
Chiawana HS*

In 1970, AWSP’s Student Leadership program hosted four leadership camps at the Cispus Learning Center. In 2019, we will host 16 camps between our two sites — Cispus and Chewelah Peak. By these student testimonials, I have been assured that the experience of camp is still life-changing for individuals and the schools that send them. Since 1955, the vision of the school principals in Washington state to develop student leaders at camp has been unwavering. I am proud to be a part of the premier student leadership program in the United States.



The spirit is always high when the entire group of delegates gather in the auditorium for presentations.

MAKING OUR VOICES HEARD



Recapping AWSP's 2019 'Day on the Hill'

Roz Thompson

Government Relations & Advocacy
Director, AWSP



In a chilly and bright Monday morning in January, over 40 principals from across the state attended our 2019

"Day on the Hill." We also welcomed 10 administrative interns from PLU to our event and their experiences and participation were a fabulous addition.

This annual event in Olympia coincides with our winter board meetings when our AWSP Executive Board and our three component boards meet the last weekend of January in the SeaTac area. On Sunday evening of this weekend, the Executive Board and members of the AWSP Advocacy Committee head to Olympia to prepare for their legislative visit.

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Engaging Communities

AWSP's Executive Board and members of the AWSP Advocacy Committee met on "The Hill" in January.

HEAD FOR THE HILL

We started early on Monday with a breakfast meeting and reviewed and passed out multiple copies of the AWSP Legislative Platform and the Local Funding Work Group document which we share later with policymakers. The Local Funding Work Group develops common talking points each year related to education funding and consists of WASA, WSSDA, WASBO, AEA, WSPA, and AWSP. After some policy and logistics review, we donned our brightly colored AWSP scarves and headed to The Hill.

Our headquarters for the day was the Washington Room in the Pritchard Building. Principals came and went as they had time between

appointments with their legislators. We also welcomed Gary Kipp's PLU interns here and were able to share some strategy and talking points with them. Some of the interns had already set up appointments with legislators and I encouraged them to also go visit legislators even if they didn't have appointments and emphasized that meeting with legislative assistants was extremely valuable as well. Several principals and interns also attended the House Education Committee hearing that afternoon and one intern even testified on a bill!

TIME WELL SPENT

The feedback we received throughout the day and afterwards was very positive. Principals who attended

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felt like they had meaningful conversations with many legislators involving topics ranging from funding for special education, the School Employees Benefit Board, and simple majority for school bonds to school safety, the need for mental health supports and the disparity of compensation in the administrative salary structure compared to teachers.

What is most meaningful to me, however, is that principals and interns who attended felt like their voices were heard and that they took an important step in establishing relationships with legislators. Many reported that the legislative assistants and/or legislators that they met with plan to reach out to them throughout the session with questions or when they need more information from principals. This is critical in my mind because as fast-paced as each day and week of the legislative session seem to be, each moment of conversation with legislators builds upon other moments and our collective voices are being heard in Olympia.

A huge thanks to those who traveled to Olympia to spend time meeting with legislators. Anyone can be an advocate and if you are interested in getting involved in advocacy efforts for AWSP, contact me! ■



AWSP Board and AWSP Advocacy Committee members make the principal voice heard in Olympia.



Board and committee members meet with Rep. Mike Volz.

“This was my first time participating in AWSP’s Day on the Hill, I’m always in awe of our Capitol and the process that takes place there. Keeping my ‘awe’ in check, I was able to visit with a half dozen legislators from central Washington. I have to admit, I had heard that some of my legislators were not approachable and even ‘standoffish’ when it came to meeting with educators.

I was surprised at the welcome I received in most of their offices. I was greeted warmly, thoughtfully listened to, asked deep questions about our issues, and felt genuinely heard. At this point in my career, advocating for AWSP has opened my eyes to professional advocacy and empowered me to share my experience with decision makers.”

Todd Hilmes, AWMLP Vice President, Principal, Naches Valley Middle

“Visiting one-on-one with seven of our elected representatives in Olympia in February confirmed for me their commitment to equitable public school education. They know they need to do something this session about funding special education, and are very aware that school administrators and other non-instructional staff did not receive the intended share of the salary funding provided last year. Initially I

was intimidated to meet with a legislator, but over time I have discovered we share a common commitment to serve, to lead, and to address emerging needs with limited resources. Almost always these conversations lead to more focused communication as legislators seek input later in the session.”

David Jones, ESPAW Past President, Retired

“It was a great opportunity to discuss our needs as K-12 principals with the authors of policy. It empowered me as a professional and added fuel to my policy passion!”

Ashley Landes, Assistant Principal, Skyline High School, Issaquah SD

“I came away from this day realizing that my voice does matter and by contacting legislators it is not impossible to think that I can make a difference, legislatively, for my students.”

Kim Marinelli, PLU Admin Intern

“I began the day with no idea how AWSP’s ‘Day on the Hill’ would transpire. However, it turned into the day where I became a voice for my students and teachers, in a very public forum. Here is the kicker though – I would absolutely do it again.”

Katie Kehoe, PLU Admin Intern

Make Your High School League Meetings Count

From Athletics and WIAA to a Robust PLN



Brent Osborn

Principal, Lakeside High School, Nine Mile Falls SD

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Engaging the Community, Improving Instruction

If you are a high school principal, you have undoubtedly been to league meetings with your athletic director. For some of you, it is once a month, or once a quarter, or maybe twice a year. You sit around talking about WIAA amendments with your athletic directors, who should host districts, inevitably someone brings up how they want the 16-team state basketball tournament back – which dominates the next hour – and you spend the rest of the meeting wishing you were in your building getting stuff done.

It does not have to be that way!

“At first, we still talked athletics, but added topics we were dealing with in our buildings. That quickly grew to a group of principals who are just a phone call or a text away at all times to deal with the complexities of principalship.”

DEVELOPING A PLN

In the Northeast “A” (NEA) we do it differently. We created a Principal Leadership Network (PLN): A collaborative group of school leaders who understand we can learn and grow from each other. Six years ago, we branched off from our ADs and met at an adjacent table at our

meetings. At first, we still talked athletics, but added topics we were dealing with in our buildings. That quickly grew to a group of principals who are just a phone call or a text away at all times to deal with the complexities of principalship.

Now, we are in our second year where we do not even meet with the

Continued on page 42



Principal Brent Osborn shares some thoughts with Sen. Wellman during an AWSP Board Meeting.

ADs at all. We meet as a league of principals six times throughout the year, separate from athletics, and we collaborate. We have taken an interest in helping each other be the best we can be, for the success of all kids in our communities.

What we gained is amazing.

We are all single high school districts, so we get to lean on each other for advice. Here are just a few items we have discussed this year already:

- Colville is using a positive attendance system school-wide and has leveraged that power to add focused intervention time into the school day.
- Riverside has a highly functional lunchtime homework intervention eliminating ninth- grade failures.

“ I truly cannot imagine not having this amazing group of principals to collaborate with. We all learned and improved because of our work together.”

- Medical Lake fired up an incentive-based attendance program that is significantly reducing absenteeism.
- Newport adopted and implemented a mental health curriculum to allow all kids access to this vital information.
- Freeman reduced lost class time by implementing a simple first 10/ last 10 policy that is also reducing student vaping.

- Deer Park shared with us their large College in the High School program and how they sustain it.
- Lakeside shared how we are tracking and intervening within our MTSS program.

I truly cannot imagine not having this amazing group of principals to collaborate with. We all learned and improved because of our work together.

A CHALLENGE

So, high school principals, I challenge you: next time you meet with each other, the agenda should be academic heavy. Maybe spend some time on each of the SQSS Indicators. The principalship is a difficult profession. However, it is made easier if we do not work in silos. So reach out to your colleagues and start a PLN today! ■



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A 'Grow Your Own' District-University Collaboration

The South Puget Sound Principal Preparation Partnership

Mike Walker

Associate Program Director & Associate Professor, School of Applied Leadership, City University of Seattle

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Communities

School district leaders with vision, capacity, and commitment are taking the initiative to partner with universities to “grow their own” principals.

In Northwest Washington, City University of Seattle and Puyallup Public Schools have joined forces to offer outstanding leadership development via the South Puget Sound Principal Preparation Partnership.

'GROW THEIR OWN' LEADERS

Residency administrator preparation depends on cooperation between the university and the school district. Minimally, the university delivers course work, field supervision, and certification support, while the district provides internship placement and mentor.

In response to needs for larger numbers of more highly qualified school leader applicants (Basom & Yerkes, 2004; Hallinger & Bridges, 2017; Taylor & Gordon, 2015), some districts have sought to increase their roles in preparing principals and other school leadership positions like assistant principal, dean of students, and program administrator. To “grow their own” leaders, some districts sponsor leadership academies for



CityU Puyallup Partnership cohorts 1 and 2 on their Feb. 18 visit to the Washington State Legislature.

promising teacher leaders, host university courses and seminars at school sites, and encourage their administrators to mentor interns and to teach university administrator prep courses or to serve as guest lecturers in universities' principal preparation programs.

CityU and Puyallup Public Schools proudly promote their joint venture, the South Puget Sound Principal Preparation Partnership. In Spring 2018, the 2017-2019 cohort of principal candidates finished their preparatory course work and was poised to start the yearlong internship. In this 100% face-to-face, cohort model, candidates attend classes in the district office on Tuesday and Thursday evenings. Current district administrators

renowned for their expertise and reputations in state and national education are hired as CityU faculty.

To close the link between academic preparation and internship application, faculty also serve as field supervisors during the internship in the second half of the two-year program. Among the impressive faculty are Superintendent Tim Yeomans and Chief Assessment and Accountability Officer Glenn Malone, who also coordinates the Puyallup side of the partnership.

SUCCESSFUL PLACEMENTS

The partnership's philosophy expresses CityU's and Puyallup's strong beliefs in excellent, deep, and wide preparation consistent with

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the district's vision, mission, and beliefs about success for all students. Dr. Yeomans and Dr. Malone express confidence that, while this preparation has deep roots in the "Puyallup Way," leadership skills readily transfer to other districts' leadership needs. This local approach to professional development, partnered with a CityU Principal Certificate has significantly improved the quality of local candidates for school leadership positions. The program has not only benefited Puyallup, but all local districts have access to send and hire candidates.

"Puyallup has been working with Principal Certification students since 2014," said Malone. "Since that time we have helped prepare over 50 school leaders. Our totals are very impressive and we are thrilled with our 96% placement rate!"

Malone said the program has produced participants serving in a variety of capacities.

"Our students are currently serving as two chief officers, three deans, five directors, 10 principals, and 28 assistant principals," he added. "They serve communities across Washington state in Mt. Baker, Leavenworth, Port Angeles, Kent, Highline, Clover Park, Tacoma, Franklin Pierce, Sumner, Orting, Chief Leschi, Bethel, Enumclaw, Federal Way, Bellevue, and Puyallup—18 of our current administrators—and one in Colorado!"

EXCELLENT SCHOOL LEADERS

CityU Educational Leadership Director Dr. Margaret Chow is elated to support our partnership with Puyallup Public Schools to prepare excellent principals and school leaders. In addition, to this amazingly powerful, district-embedded, cohort-based, face-to-face model, CityU also makes principal and program administrator preparation accessible

via a personalized variety of mixed-mode and online options.

City University of Seattle is accredited through the doctoral level. It is dedicated to serving the working adult and transfer student and has been ranked in the top 50 Best Online Bachelor's Programs in the nation seven consecutive years 2013-2019 by U.S. News & World Report. ■

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CAN YOU MEASURE **HOPE** IN YOUR SCHOOL?



Dr. Scott Seaman

Executive Director, AWSP

PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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

Have you ever stood in the hallway of your school and just counted the smiles on students' faces? Yes, I just said that.

I know you spend much of your time in the hallways supervising the flow and traffic of kids everyday, but how about grabbing some data during that supervision?

And yes, I'm asking you to track data on the smiles, or lack thereof, on students' faces.

A HOPE-FILLED CULTURE

I can hear the skeptics right now questioning why in the world someone would count smile data and what possibly could be used with such data. Well, my dear skeptics, that question usually brings a smile to my face. Students laughing, interacting with peers and adults, doors being held for each other, warm greetings, and smiles are all indicators of a positive school culture. I would even argue that not only does that indicate a positive school culture, but also a hope-filled culture.

Great, now the skeptics are saying that I've completely lost my mind because I'm talking about smiles and hope in the same article. The last time I checked school improvement indicators, smiles and hope are not on

the index. And, they are not part of the state's report card, and certainly don't sit as data points on district websites. But why not?

We all look back on our lives and can cite specific adults who were responsible for shaping, changing, and/or redirecting our paths. These student-adult relationships were based on unconditional and unwavering support and encouragement. It was this support that gave us all hope. Rick Miller, founder and president of Kids at Hope, says, "We don't control most of the risk children experience, but we do control much of the hope." So, why don't we, as a system, attempt to measure it?

THE EXPECTATION GAP

"Hope is not a strategy" and "You can't measure hope" are two of the comments I hear most from "experts" in the field. I would argue those experts need to spend more time in the schools where they can see hope in action.

There are countless examples of schools across our state where hope is the foundation for eliminating opportunity, access, and achievement gaps. This foundation wasn't built overnight. It took consistent principal

leadership and a collective and unilateral focus on addressing and closing the most important gap first — the expectation gap. The gap that calls attention to how adults view the students in the school. Once again from Rick Miller, "Anyone can judge children by their behavior. It takes an extraordinary person to judge them by their potential."

I would argue hope is a strategy and it starts with the principal. Principals create hope for all. Principals have the opportunity to create and lead hope in their schools. They start by modeling the belief that all students can and will be successful, no exceptions. This belief is strategically developed into school-wide culture supported by hope-designed systems that ultimately creates an organization that makes the impossible possible.

As I travel the state, popping in and out of schools and having countless conversations with students, they remind me on a daily basis the important role principals play in establishing a hope-filled school culture. Students often share their experiences about the relationships they have with their principals. They cite the authentic and sincere

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interactions in classes, the lunchroom, and yes, the hallways. One student told me, “The most important thing I want in a principal is a relationship. A principal who takes the time to get to know me on a personal level.”

GET OUT THERE!

So, where do you start? Get out in the hallways. Break away from the chains of your email inbox (which is a whole other topic) and get out there with the kids. A principal who models relationship-building with all kids is one of the first steps in building the foundation of hope. Next, examine the language adults use in your building when talking about kids. Are you referring to students as “at-risk” or “Tier 1?,” or is every student full of treasures just waiting to be discovered? This language shift is up to you.

I learned an important lesson as a principal one day when a student approached me in the hallway and said, “How come you are never smiling?”

Ouch.

That was a student comment that really struck home. It caused me to take some time for deep reflection. I always thought of myself as outwardly smiling and genuinely being positive, but a student just told me otherwise. Thanks to her comment, I made a point of channeling the stresses of running a school, and not letting that stress sit on my face. Instead, the first smile I started counting in the halls was my own... before I started counting others.

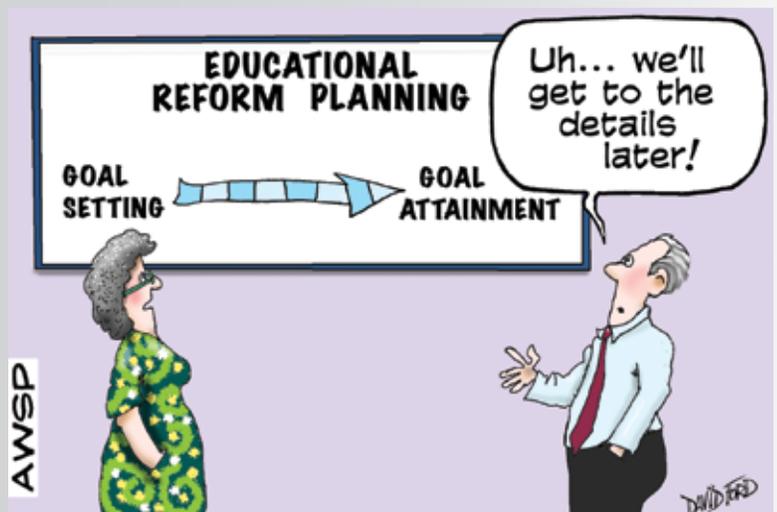
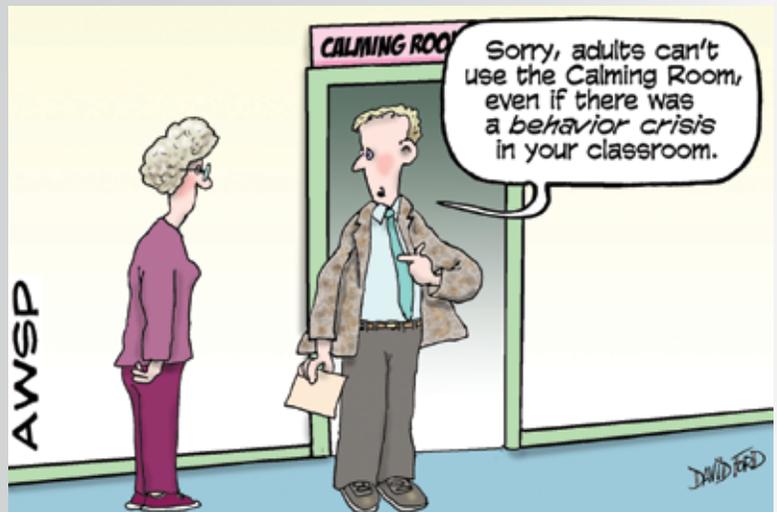
Here’s my challenge: Work on your own smile first, then start collecting smile data in your school next. Let AWSP work on getting smiles and hope added to the school report card. ■



Dr. Scott Seaman joined AWSP in the fall of 2013 after serving as the principal at Tumwater High School. In July 2018, he assumed duties as Executive Director.

Humor me!

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





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