

LEADERS in Unexpected Places

AWSL programs help schools find student leaders in every part of a school's community

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

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



“When someone sees my abilities and supports me in cultivating them, it motivates me to further develop my natural talents even when I can't see them within myself.”

– Anna Gonzalez, Othello High

Who was the person who tapped you on the shoulder and told you, “You are a leader”?

Can you think of a time or situation where you felt seen by an adult, as they empowered you to take your skills and use them to your fullest leadership potential? These important moments have been pivotal in our lives, and careers and have certainly shaped us into who we are.

As we walk through the hallways of schools each and every day the question for us to ask is, how many students have been tapped on the shoulder with a similar leadership wand?

‘I SEE YOU’

As we continue our journey into 2020, the Association of Washington Student Leaders continues to ask the question, “Who are the students furthest away from hope and opportunity, and how can we close that gap?” As we examine equity, opportunity, and

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access throughout all aspects of our origination and offerings it has become our charge to eliminate the mantra of “train and empower student leaders” to “train and empower (all) students to lead.” This intentional language change has caused systemic changes in how we market, promote, create, and teach our programs and services.

An example of this has been the creation of Mission Peak Leadership Camp, a high school summer camp that brings together students who lead from throughout the entire school, a la “The Breakfast Club” to create connection, shared experience and to create a community where all of their leadership skills can be elevated. Students from Band, Football, ASB, Dance Team, Multi-Cultural Club, Honor Society, and students who just lead without being linked to an extracurricular activity spend a week together to practice strategies that promote respect and acceptance in regard to multiple perspectives. Mission Peak opened in 2017, and over the past three years

has served as a subtle yet powerful reminder that there are leaders in all corners of schools, just waiting for the moment to be told, “I see you.”

“Mission Peak is for everyone. Whether you are a strong leader, want to become a strong leader, or you don't consider yourself a leader at all, Mission Peak will give you all the necessary knowledge and confidence you need to realize that you can be absolutely anything you want to be.”

– Johnna Jensen, Republic High

As Dr. Paul Batalden says, “Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets.” As long as leadership in schools remains centered around those who benefit most from the status quo, we lose opportunities to elevate, cultivate and develop potential leaders within our schools. When we begin to open doors and create pathways for ALL students to lead, we can witness the true power of kids these days, as they become the true agents of change in our world.

SUPPORTING ALL SCHOOLS, PRINCIPALS

The Association of Washington Student Leaders is determined to create a paradigm shift as it relates to the definition of a leader. We want to challenge the gatekeepers of leadership opportunities to cast a wider net and to find leaders in unexpected places. It is our belief that all students can learn leadership skills, just like they can learn math, science, and social studies. Let us take the time to be treasure hunters in our schools and find those leaders just waiting to be found. As always, our students say it better than we ever could.

“Often leaders get recognized for being loud, energetic, and extroverted—the leaders who stand in front and are the most visible in the public eye of the school. There are more of us out there. There is nothing better when adults find the leader in every student and create the moment for that student to feel seen. It is an incredible feeling.”

– Averie Golladay, Warden High

Students, when given opportunities to lead, infuse these learnings into themselves. AWSL is here to support all schools and principals on this path. ■

From OSPI’s guide: SEL is not a way to “grade” or identify deficits, and it is not just a curriculum or add-on. Rather, SEL is an intentional approach to building student assets.

AWSL works to create programming options that meet the needs of all students as leaders, to nurture and grow in that capacity, and to understand their own self-identity as well as the social constructs in which they roam. We continue to develop our offerings for increased knowledge and proficiency but are infusing OSPI’s social-emotional learning standards into all our programs and events. Visit bit.ly/2wZW90x



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