As I write this letter, we are in the midst of sweeping state and national political developments. It’s hard to recall a new year that began with such uncertainty and concern for so many citizens. At the state level, with the levy cliff looming on the horizon, it’s questionable whether there’s the political will in the Legislature to finally address the cliff or the larger McCleary issues before you are forced to make staffing decisions for next year. And regarding that ruling, it appears that the Senate’s answer to McCleary is a complete redefinition of basic education with yet unknown impacts.

At the federal level, recent executive orders by President Trump have made it clear that he intends to follow through on his most controversial campaign promises. It seems that each day new questions are raised about the legal and constitutional violations his administration may be committing. While those questions will occupy legal scholars for years to come, there’s little doubt that you are already feeling the impact of this federal policy shift in your schools.

All of these change forces present significant new challenges for educational leaders. And yet, one of the characteristics of great leaders is that they overcome such challenges to stay focused on their organization’s key mission. Clearly, for educational leaders that mission is to ensure the success of all our students. Keeping that focus despite these challenges won’t be easy, but it’s why you’ve been called to your current leadership role.

Leadership guru, David Irvine, offers some thoughts on how one does that in a short article entitled Leadership in Uncertain Times. He identifies nine strategies to help leaders navigate the kind of uncertainty we currently face:

1. **Maintain health habits.** In times of stress and uncertainty, you may not have time for rest, exercise, renewal or connections with good friends, but these are the times when such habits are needed most.

2. **Communicate. Communicate. Communicate.** When things around us are uncertain and people feel vulnerable and overwhelmed, getting information is critical.

3. **Be creative.** While uncertain and unstable times may not lead to your highest levels of productivity, chaos is a time to be creative.

4. **Take care of your people.** Make deposits in the trust accounts of the people who depend on you and upon whom you depend.

5. **Distinguish between what you can and can’t control.** Three simple rules can help keep your sanity and serenity when facing any challenge: 1) change the changeable; 2) accept the unchangeable; and 3) remove yourself from the unacceptable.

6. **Keep your character intact.** It’s not the fierceness of the storm that determines whether we break, but rather the strength of the roots that lie below the surface. Character is the courage to meet the demands of reality.

7. **Take time for reflection and learning.** Times of change and chaos are good times for creative thinking and exploring new ways to lead your business and your life.

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8. **Maintain perspective.** Whenever I think of hard times, I think of my grandfather who raised ten kids in a 900-square foot shack on a farm during the Depression. Maintaining perspective also means realizing that you are more than your job, and your job fits into a wider context.

9. **Find a new source of security:** The “3 F’s.” When your outer world is disrupted, it is good to remember the “3 F’s of security: Faith, Family, and Friends.”

While I doubt that any of these strategies are new to you, they provide a good reminder of what leaders do to retain their quiet resolve in the face of a storm. Your success in mastering these strategies could well determine your success in helping the students and staff you lead navigate the uncertainty and chaos that we’re currently experiencing. And your ability to do that will go a long way toward achieving the educational mission of your school district.

**Graduation Equity With a Specific Focus on 9th Grade Success**

OSPI is preparing to publically release the graduation and 9th grade course failure data on February 22, 2017 and has provided the following information about that release. The graduation data were placed in district preview in late January, and the 9th grade failure data were released to districts in late October 2016. The 9th grade course failure data will be refreshed based on district feedback and re-released February 8. The next three weeks provides an opportunity for superintendents to review the analytics and begin conversations within their district to respond programmatically. It will also provide time to develop a communications plan to address potential media inquiries.

Why are these data being presented together? With graduation as an ultimate goal for every student, research indicates that 9th grade course failure is an evidence-based early warning indicator. Support of these struggling students is critical. According to research conducted by the University of Chicago (2014),* students on track after their 9th grade year are 4 times more likely to graduate. Further, their research found 9th grade success was the single best determinant of whether or not a student would graduate; it is a more accurate predictor of graduation than student test scores, personal characteristics, or background.

These analytics, consistent with the other OSPI Performance Indicator Equity Analytics, display a range of rates across districts. They show trends over time and disproportionality gaps between specific student subgroups. By combining overall rates and gaps, a scatter plot provides a way to easily identify who is experiencing success. The primary purpose of the analytics is to learn from these “highlight” districts by collecting key processes and practices. WASA is working with OSPI, other professional associations, and ESDs to broaden awareness and provide effective strategic supports.

Specific to graduation, OSPI has partnered with Gonzaga University in a Graduation Equity Initiative to determine practices the highlight districts have proven effective at improving overall rates and minimizing disproportionality. The common themes underlying the success include: transformational leadership, collaborative inquiry, tiered system of supports, and data-driven processes. Documents created through the initiative include: reflective questions to help explore data and identify root causes, a current reality assessment tool, key practices, and 45-day action planning. They can be found at [www.k12.wa.us/GATE/GraduationEquity](http://www.k12.wa.us/GATE/GraduationEquity).

A similar process to identify districts experiencing 9th grade success will be conducted in the coming months. A summary of current research and an initial collection of best practices surrounding 9th grade success can be found at [www.k12.wa.us/9thGradeSuccess](http://www.k12.wa.us/9thGradeSuccess).

For information on how to access your data in the district preview site, visit the district preview website at [http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/Webinars.aspx](http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/Webinars.aspx).

We look forward to working with you on this important effort. More to come.

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*Preventable Failure—Improvements in Long-Term Outcomes when High Schools Focused on the Ninth Grade Year, April 2014, The University of Chicago Consortium on Chicago School Research.*
Upcoming Conferences & Workshops

2017 ERNN CONFERENCE
February 10–11 | Red Lion Hotel, Olympia
Register now at www.wasa-oly.org/ERNN17.

2017 WASA/WSSDA/WASBO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE
February 12–13 | South Puget Sound Community College and Capitol Campus, Olympia
Register now at www.wasa-oly.org/Leg17.

2017 VISIBLE LEARNING FOUNDATION DAY
February 15 | Four Points by Sheraton, SeaTac
Register now at www.wasa-oly.org/VL17.

2017 AASA NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON EDUCATION
March 2–4 | Ernest N. Morial Convention Center, New Orleans, LA
Register now at http://nce.aasa.org/.

2017 WASA SMALL SCHOOLS CONFERENCE
March 13–14 | Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee
Register now at www.wasa-oly.org/smallschools17.

2017 WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP CONFERENCE
April 29 | Campbell’s Resort, Chelan
Registration opens February 28.

2017 WASA SUPERINTENDENT WORKSHOP
April 30–May 2 | Campbell’s Resort, Chelan
Registration opens February 28.

2017 WASA/AWSP/WSSDA EQUITY CONFERENCE
May 24 | DoubleTree Hotel, SeaTac
Registration opens mid-February.

Welcome new members

Melissa Laramie, Puget Sound ESD
Michelle Gwinn, Spokane Public Schools
Jewelle Harmon, Kent School District
David Herrera, Downtown College Prep
Richard Serns, Winlock School District
Lisa Muchlinski, Pasco School District
Dan Casler, Mccleary School District
Michael Sullivan, Marysville School District
Patricia Gelbrich, Castle Rock School District

Do you know someone who wants to join WASA? Tell them to visit online and sign up today!

Engage with your legislators during this session of the 65th Washington State Legislature. Use this session guide to align your messages with WASA’s 2017 Legislative Platform and find up-to-date contact information.

THE 2017 LEGISLATIVE SESSION GUIDE IS NOW AVAILABLE!
Visible Learning Foundation Day
February 15, 2017 | Four Points by Sheraton, SeaTac

Corwin, in partnership with WASA, is pleased to present a one-day conference with John Hattie and Michael McDowell, designed to provide you with practical activities and take-away tools.

Visible Learning is an in-depth school change model of professional learning and development based on the research of Professor John Hattie. Through the lens of Visible Learning evidence, you will learn to systematically examine effective instructional practice to determine the impact on student achievement and learning. By considering effects of the practices of teachers and leaders, schools will be able to make significant gains in student achievement.

Participants will identify and discuss the most important messages from the Visible Learning research, learn about the five strands of Visible Learning, and know the difference between influences that do and do not make a significant impact on student achievement.

Learn more and register at www.wasa-oly.org/VL17. WASA members receive a discounted rate of $399 with code WASAVL.

Don’t miss out on our preconference workshops!

- Using OSPI Equity Analytics to Inform Systematic Responses to Graduation: Foundational and Advanced
- Using OSPI Equity Analytics to Inform Systematic Responses to Graduation: Foundational
- Using OSPI Equity Analytics to Inform Systematic Responses to Graduation: Advanced
- Learning Behaviors for Teams and Leaders: Habits That Accelerate Learning
- Creating and Supporting Trauma Sensitive Learning Environments
- Designing for Effective Digital Transformation
- TPEP Stage I Required Trainings

Learn more and register now at wasa-oly.org/summer17.

Fostering Growth
WASA Small Schools Conference
March 13–14 | Wenatchee Convention Center

The WASA Small Schools Conference is designed with leaders of districts with 2,500 students or fewer in mind. This year’s conference, Fostering Growth, will explore how you support your students, staff, community, and your own development as leaders.

From the opening keynote by Muriel Summers, to the closing session with Andrew McCrea, and all the sessions and discussions in-between, you will have opportunities to consider ways in which you can promote growth within your district for the ultimate benefit of your students.

Learn more at wasa-oly.org/smallschools17.

This Week In Olympia

Don’t forget to check out the latest news happening in Olympia every Friday during session! Your copy of This Week In Olympia is waiting in your email inbox and online at www.wasa-oly.org/twio.

Deadline for return of completed forms: February 13, 2017
Release data: March 30, 2017
Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards

WASA is now accepting applications for the Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards. Three awards are presented each year to a highly effective superintendent, central office administrator, or building administrator from a small, medium, and large school district. Nominees must be active members of AWSP or WASA to be eligible. The deadline to submit an application is March 21. For more information and the application, please visit the WASA website at: http://bit.ly/1zxq1uA. For questions, contact Marilee Jensen at mjensen@wasa-oly.org or 360.943.5717.

WASA Board of Directors’ Positions Open

Interested in serving on the WASA Board? Recruitment is underway for the following positions. Terms begin July 1, 2017.

- Superintendents Component Chair-elect (3-year commitment)
  Candidate #1: Shane Backlund, Selah SD
  Candidate #2: TBD

- Instructional Program Administrators Component Chair-elect (2-year commitment)
  Candidate #1: Jennifer Kindle, Selah SD
  Candidate #2: TBD

- Special Education Component Chair (2-year commitment)
  Candidate #1: Jennifer Traufler, Tacoma SD
  Candidate #2: TBD

The deadline to submit interest in serving on the WASA Board is February 20. For more information, contact Executive Director Bill Keim at bkeim@wasa-oly.org or 360.943.5717.

Upcoming Awards & Scholarships

Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Awards

One highly effective superintendent, central office administrator, or building administrator will be selected from a small district (up to 500 students), medium-sized district (501–2,000 students), and large district (over 2,000 students).

Application Process: January 17–March 21, 2017

Doyle E. Winter Scholarship for Administrative Leadership in Education

Designed to assist talented and committed educational administrators as they enhance those skills and abilities needed to serve as educational leaders in the field of K–12 public education.

Application Process: March 1–April 25, 2017

WASA HONORARY AWARDS

State Awards

The state awards include the Golden Gavel, Barbara Mertens Legacy, Service to WASA, and WASA Leadership.

Application Process: March 1–May 1, 2017

Region Awards

These awards are handled at the region level and include the Award of Merit, WASA Student Achievement Leadership, Twenty-Year, Retirement, and Community Leadership.

Application Process: March 1–May 2017 (deadlines vary by region)

Superintendent of the Year

The Superintendent of the Year program is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, frontline superintendents.

Application Process: May 1–October 1, 2017

To review the criteria for the various awards, visit the WASA website at http://bit.ly/2g3DV0W. More information will be included in future editions of Hotline.

UPLOAD YOUR MEMBERSHIP PHOTO!

If you haven’t already, please help us keep our membership directory up to date by taking a moment to upload your photo to your WASA member profile page. If you have questions or need assistance, please contact Tricia McCosh at pmccosh@wasa-oly.org.
Music and STEM in Kettle Falls

Like all other districts across the state, the Kettle Falls School District is hoping for a quick and decisive resolution to McCleary—ample funding for public schools. However, districts know that schools still have to move forward with optimism until that happens. Right before winter break 2016, the Kettle Falls Middle School was packed in a fire-marshall-limited-audience for the first band concert in over a decade. Two years earlier, the newly appointed superintendent, Dr. Thaynan Knowlton, visited with the local Rotary, Lady Lions, senior center, and businesses to determine what the community would support in a levy. A clear message of music was heard—parents and others wanted their children to play instruments and attend concerts. So, Kettle Falls SD included that item as one of many wishes for the levy … and the journey began.

To move forward with that goal, a hiring team promised that they would conduct a search for a qualified teacher—although some silently wondered if the district would have any applicants, especially in the rural, eastern Washington community. The district subscribes to a national teacher database and quickly found three applicants; one from California, one from North Dakota, and one from the local area. The district flew in two candidates and invited the third to come by. All were teachers and professional performers. A rigorous process included performing for ten minutes and teaching a group of 30 students, board members, teachers, and community members for 30 minutes. The interviews were completed and feedback was gathered for each. After a late night of deliberations, the team made the choice and the results were positive. Kettle Falls was on their way to a band program once again.

Once the band program was underway, another initiative began. The high school principal and some of the teachers began writing a STEM facilities grant that required the school to generate $100K of local in-kind support. So, the administrative team visited six different local manufacturing businesses to see how they could support them. They met with managers and executives, toured facilities, and explained the grant. Businesses were happy to offer support by donating their time and expertise. Months later, Kettle Falls received a $1.6M grant to upgrade the metal shop and transform it into a dream robotics lab and a welding and fabrication workroom. The science lab would also be upgraded and improved. Architects have been in the high school and construction is set to begin this winter.

Despite statewide budget woes, Kettle Falls is finding ways to make things happen for their students and community.

Text provided by Thaynan Knowlton, Kettle Falls School District

Legislative Action Center

With major K–12 education issues on the line during the 2017 Session, WASA is encouraging school administrators to ramp up engagement with local legislators. To assist, we have updated the WASA website with a set of advocacy tools. Please visit our Legislative Action Center for:

- Archived Issues of TWIO
- WASA’s Bill Watch
- Weekly Legislative Committee Schedules

We have also begun to compile a library of sample legislative communications including:

- WASA Talking Points
- Sample Letters From Your Colleagues

Visit the site throughout session to hone your messages and consider providing us with your communications to help us build our library. Our Action Center is available at www.wasa-oly.org under “Government Relations.”
Region Events—February & March
Many WASA regions conduct monthly gatherings and/or provide activity reports in conjunction with ESD meetings (not listed below).

| REGION 101 | February 16, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. | President—Gene Sementi | General Member Meeting, NEWESD 101, Spokane |
| March 16, 8:30 a.m.–1 p.m. | General Member Meeting, NEWESD 101, Spokane |
| REGION 105 | February 16, 8–11:30 a.m. | President—Linda Martin | General Member Meeting, Topic: Bargaining, ESD 105, Yakima |
| March 16, 8–11:30 a.m. | General Member Meeting, Topic: ELL, ESD 105, Yakima |
| REGION 108 | March 10, 12 p.m. | President—Charles Burleigh | General Member Meeting, ESD 189, Anacortes |
| REGION 109 | February 2, 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. | President—Mike Johnson | Professional Learning, Topic: ESSA and TPEP Updates, Arlington High School Performing Arts Center, Arlington |
| March 23, 11:30 a.m.–2 p.m. | Professional Learning, Topic: Legislative Update From Dan Steele, Arlington High School Performing Arts Center, Arlington |
| REGION 110 | March 17, 12–1:30 p.m. | President—Traci Pierce | General Member Meeting, Topic: Central Office Leadership Frameworks, Puget Sound ESD, Renton |
| REGION 111 | March 17, 7:30 a.m. | President—Christine Moloney | General Member Meeting, Topic: Emerging Issues, WASA Elections, Fife District Office, Fife |
| REGION 112 | March 17, 10 a.m.–12 p.m. | President—Mike Stromme | General Member Meeting, ESD 112, Vancouver |
| REGION 113 | February 22, 8–9:30 a.m. | President—Kim Fry | General Member Meeting, Topic: Speaker Superintendent Chris Reykdal, ESD 113, Tumwater |
| REGION 114 | February 24, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. | President—Dana Rosenbach | General Member Meeting, ESD 114, Room 202, Bremerton |
| March 31, 9 a.m.–12 p.m. | General Member Meeting, ESD 114, Room 202, Bremerton |
| REGION 123 | February 16, 11 a.m.–12 p.m. | President—Dale Bonfield | General Member Meeting, ESD 123, PDC Cascade Room #1, Pasco |
| REGION 171 | February 16, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. | President—Ismael Vivanco | General Member Meeting, North Central ESD, Wenatchee |
| March 16, 9:30 a.m.–12 p.m. | General Member Meeting, North Central ESD, Wenatchee |

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