

# WASA NEWS

May 2021—Edition 1



## UPCOMING EVENTS

### ▪ Rethinking Stakeholder Engagement: The Essential Role of Student and Family Voice as we Reimagine Post-Pandemic Education

May 14, Virtual, 12–1 p.m.,

Dr. Tammy Campbell,  
Superintendent, Federal Way PS  
Dr. Wade Smith, Superintendent,  
Walla Walla PS

Learn about the different strategies two districts are implementing to engage and ensure stakeholder voice in this important process. Click [here](#) to register.

### ▪ WASA/WSSDA/AWSP Equity Conference

May 18–19, Virtual

8:30 a.m.–12 p.m., Daily  
Click [here](#) to register.

### ▪ 2021 WASA/AWSP Summer Conference: Junetastic

#### ○ Marisol Rerucha: Leading Restorative Practices

June 11, 8:30–10 a.m.

#### ○ UW SMART Center Part 1: Interconnected Systems Framework: School Mental Health and MTSS\*

June 14, 8:30–10:30 a.m.

#### ○ UW SMART Center Part 2: Leading for Well-Being: Using MESS to Build a Culture of Wellness for ALL\*

June 21, 2–4 p.m.

#### ○ UW SMART Center Part 3: School Mental Health Research, Best Practices, and Resources\*

June 24, 8:30–10:30 a.m.

\*Registration can occur separately, or as a package.

#### ○ D.J. Batiste: Power of Engagement

June 29, 8:30–10 a.m.

Click [here](#) to learn more and register.

*“Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it is the only thing that ever has.”*

Margaret Mead

WASA Members,

The 2021 Legislative Session produced bittersweet results for schools. Last fall, the state was looking down the barrel of a massive deficit and we were hoping to essentially hold our ground for school funding. By March, the revenue forecast had improved considerably, and the state had much more money to work with.

The good news is the massive revenue shortfalls related to enrollment and transportation were addressed reasonably well by the legislature. There were a few exceptions however, where some school districts did not fare as well as others.

The biggest disappointment lies in that the Legislature made very little investment in long-term sustainable funding that would address needs for students. With the money available to them at this time, we are disheartened the Legislature did not take advantage of this opportunity to make a down payment for staffing enhancements that would provide much-needed support for the social-emotional needs of our students. There has never been a time when more money for nurses, counselors, and mental health support is needed as students transition back to in-person learning.

That said, we held our own and the picture is much more positive today than last fall as we were gearing up for what we anticipated to be a very difficult session. Thanks to those of you who engaged with legislators to advocate for schools and make a case for your district’s story. Despite this being a “remote” legislative session, WASA member engagement was stronger than ever before. Your efforts most certainly made a difference to influence those who questioned why schools needed resources to educate students remotely.

With the 2021 Session in the history books, now is the time to circle back with legislators to further strengthen the connection you have built with them during the past year. It is the time outside of session when you are best able to maintain and strengthen your relationships with them. We are playing the long game here, and we’d like to see you positioned to be a “go to” for legislators as they return to Olympia next winter for the 2022 Session. There are a variety of different ways to stay connected, none of which must be difficult or time consuming:

- Now is the time to send a brief thank you to legislators for their support of K–12 education during the 2021 session—a card, email, or phone call will do.
- Consider expressing appreciation for the legislative fixes related to enrollment and transportation, and/or additional funding for counselors.
- Share with them your excitement and optimism for getting more students back to in-person learning this coming fall.
- Invite a legislator(s) to visit your schools now, attend graduation or other special events, visit with student leaders, join a board meeting or work session, etc.

I suspect the last thing on your mind right now is tending to the relationships you have with legislators. But the next six months present an opportunity to engage with them at a time when they are not preoccupied with the session and you are not competing for airtime with all the other stakeholders who have their own agendas and special interests.

Ample funding and smart policy fuel your work and accelerate attainment of your vision. Bad policy and lack of resources make it all-the-more difficult to achieve everything you desire for the students in your schools. Influencing legislators in an effective fashion will yield the support your students need to enjoy a successful school experience. I urge you to take a few moments and reach out to your legislators today.

Best Regards,

*Joel*

## LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

On April 25, the Legislature adjourned its 2021 Session. Coming into the session, the overarching priority of WASA was to avoid budget reductions. When revenue forecasts turned positive, and it was clear drastic cuts were not a part of the equation, we quickly shifted our short-term defensive posture and started to advance our long-term objectives, including updating the staffing ratios as a part of the Prototypical School Funding Model—in particular, requests to enhance positions addressing student health, safety, and well-being. Legislators, with their focus on other issues, largely ignored our requests, and the Legislature adjourned with a hugely missed opportunity.

Our other major focus was to ensure financial stability for our school districts, specifically around enrollment and pupil transportation. The final 2021–23 Operating Budget includes funding for both Enrollment Stabilization and Pupil Transportation Stabilization. Enrollment Stabilization is provided to districts only requiring the use of ESSER II federal funds before access to state funding, leaving ESSER III federal dollars to be used as Congress intended—for the safe reopening of schools and for activities related to student learning recovery. Pupil Transportation Stabilization is also provided, in both “emergency” funding for the current school year to shore up budgets, as well as funding for the 2021–22 school year being calculated using 2019–20 ridership, rather than 2020–21’s lower numbers. School administrators’ continued engagement and advocacy pushed these two issues into the “win” column.

There are many other budget details and many, many bills that will impact school districts. WASA staff are in the process of producing our annual End of Session Report, which will include full details of the 2021–23 Operating Budget and the 2021–23 Capital Budget, along with a comprehensive review of the many education-related bills the Legislature addressed this session. It will be emailed to all *TWIO* subscribers as soon as it is completed.

## AASA CORNER

- **AASA Call for Proposals:** Consider sharing the outstanding work occurring in your district on a national platform at the 2022 [National Conference](#) in Nashville. The work here in Washington state is some of the most innovative in the country, so let’s spread the story. [Proposals](#) are due **May 31, 2021**.

## ARE YOUR CBAs CURRENT WITH THE LAW?

As you begin to prepare for another bargaining cycle, it is best practice to have current CBAs reviewed by legal counsel. Much has changed over the past few years, and there may be portions of your current CBAs that are not current with the law or contain problematic language.

## QUICK LINKS

- [Washington AIMS Cohort 2](#)
- [Fact Sheet: Fall 2021 State Assessment Plan](#) (OSPI)
- [Academic and Student Well-Being Recovery Plan: Planning Guide 2021](#) (OSPI)

## INFORMATION AND RESOURCES

**Equity:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:

- Research Priority Brief: [Best Practices in Inclusive Recruiting](#) (Hanover)
- [Tools for Conducting an Inclusive Interview](#) (Hanover)
- Resource for Parents and Teachers: [Guiding Racially-Focused Conversations With Your Children](#) (Hanover)
- New Study: Five Ways Racist 1930s Housing Policies Still Haunt Schools (Brown University): A new [study](#) from Brown University identifies major links between housing discrimination of the early- to mid-twentieth century and disparities in school funding, segregation, and student achievement today.
- **Website: Facing History and Ourselves** is a global [non-profit organization](#) whose mission is to “use lessons of history to challenge teachers and their students to stand up to bigotry and hate.”

**Pandemic:** For information and resources, click the [link](#) on the WASA website. The following resources were recently uploaded:

- [The Role of Social-emotional Learning in Re-opening Schools](#) (K–12 Dive)

**Other:**

- [Resources to Support Stakeholder Well-Being – Superintendents Leadership Council](#) (WASA and Hanover Research)

## SPONSOR SPOTLIGHT!

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