



WSSDA

direct

QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER

SPRING 2019

Got Love?

A glimpse at Bellingham's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion, *p.8.*

Meet the Equity Conference keynote speaker, *p.4.* Next-level public service:

hear from six school directors turned legislator, *p.6.* 11,000 reasons to

update legal patchwork, *p.11.* **And more! >>**

Artwork courtesy of Joliette Andrade



From the Executive Director

Hello spring!

In our latest issue of *Direct*, equity has a big presence. You'll find it in our cover story out of Bellingham; the letter from our board president, Aurora Flores; in the piece about the Equity Conference's keynote speaker; and last but not least, in the section titled "Crafting a legacy." That legacy is WSSDA's first-ever statement on equity. In February, after months of walking together on a purposeful journey, the WSSDA Board unanimously adopted a statement to serve as the foundation for our work. I think the statement bears repeating:

"Equity is foundational to the work of WSSDA. Educational equity can only exist when a student's level of opportunity and achievement cannot be predicted based on race, characteristics or circumstances. Therefore, we must identify and eliminate any discriminatory beliefs, practices and prejudices within our state's public education system."

Wherever you are on your own personal equity journey, I hope you'll appreciate the stories that follow this introduction.

And speaking of journeys, I'd like to say a special thank you to the six legislators who share with us how being school directors impacted their moves to the next level of elected public leadership! At last year's annual conference, we talked about embracing your influence and that's exactly what these public servants have done!

Finally, thank you to Bellingham student Jollette Andrade for our cover image and to her school district for sharing their story with us (pg 8). As I said, everyone's equity journey (and artwork) is personal, so we are glad they were willing to share theirs.

Tim Garchow

Tim Garchow, WSSDA Executive Director



Photo shown above: WSSDA staff braving Washington D.C. temperatures for NSBA's Advocacy Institute in January. See more photos on page 7.



CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Add your voice!
Use *Direct* to share your learning with peers.

DIRECTOR TO DIRECTOR

We're looking to spotlight WSSDA members who'd like to share their insights as veteran board members, newcomers, or as exemplars of small, medium or large districts. If that's you, let us know!

PASSION PIECES

Is there a subject you feel strongly about which you'd like to raise with fellow school directors? Then submit a "passion piece" in which you, A) share why the issue is important to you, B) describe what you've learned about it that others may not know and, C) explain how this issue has informed your work as a school director.

FOR THE GOOD OF THE ORDER

If your district has experienced success (or failure) that would be instructive to others, let us know so we can help you tell the story!

REVIEWED BY PEERS

Is there a book, a training or professional development event, software, or even an app that has benefited you? Did it help your school district, or even just one school? Then spread the word by writing a review about it. Your story will give peers a chance to take notice.

For submissions, questions or comments, contact Sean Duke, communications officer, at s.duke@wssda.org.

Produced quarterly by



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Editor-in-Chief Sean Duke

Designer Abigail Twombly

Technology Support Specialist Cassandra Heide

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Leadership Development

– Colleen Miller

We've expanded professional development options for boards across the state over the past year. By offering more regional training opportunities, board members can spend more time learning and less time traveling. We also **selected ten consultants to join our cadre** of trainers available to provide workshops, training and retreats statewide. As we continue developing WSSDA's OnBoard curriculum for school directors, we're also preparing the trainers to use it in delivering high-quality learning experiences. This spring, Tricia and I present at the National School Board Association (NSBA) conference in Philadelphia. We will be joined by **Dr. Ivan Lorentzen** and **Dr. William McCaw** for a half-day early bird workshop to present research findings regarding correlations between WSSDA's Board Self-Assessment data and improved student achievement. We'll also facilitate part of NSBA's Board Boot Camp and support WSSDA's Hero of Education, **Elissa Dyson**, as she presents about her journey to visit all of Washington's small school districts. For the remainder of spring, the bulk of our focus is on making a successful transition as I retire, after **41 years in public education**, and Tricia takes the helm as the next director of leadership development on June 1, 2019.



Leadership hero Colleen Miller facilitated a creative Leadership WSSDA class this March.

Government Relations

– Jessica Vavrus

The Legislative Committee and WSSDA's GR team have shifted into high gear **navigating the current session**. Bills that address all "buckets" of WSSDA's priorities are moving forward. Every day, we are working with legislators and their staff to refine bills that we hope will stay "alive."



Melissa Gombosky and Jessica Vavrus presenting on TVW's Capitol Classroom

Every Friday, we record webinars to keep board leg reps (and anyone else who tunes in) up to date. And you know what happens every Sunday...our written legislative update! A new opportunity for me this session has been serving as co-instructor on TWV's hands-on civics education program called **Capitol Classroom**. Fourteen high school classes around the state are connected with professional lobbyists/government relations representatives via video conferencing. The classes learn about the legislative process and work with us to select legislation to support, oppose or amend. My colleague **Melissa Gombosky** and I are working with an A.P. Government class from **Timberline High School** in the North Thurston School District. They've elected to advocate for bills related to graduation requirements and multiple pathways. Learn how to get involved in the program and find a link to our class at teachwithtwv.org/capitol-classroom.

Policy and Legal

– Abigail Westbrook

We hope you'll see the latest issue of *Policy & Legal News*, which includes an important article on **preventing the sexual abuse of students**. You'll also find an article about revisions to policies pertaining to **school district accounting and budgeting**. These revisions will have your policies and procedures ready for the 2019-2020 school year. These days, you'll find us busy assisting WSSDA's Government Relations team with **analyzing proposed legislation**, providing feedback, and suggesting alternative language. By working closely together, our branches are doing everything we can to have a positive impact on the legislative session. Finally, we're excited that WSSDA's Resolutions Committee, which is the steward of WSSDA's permanent positions, has **aligned the process** for proposing revisions to the permanent positions with the window and process for legislative positions. We hope this alignment will make it easier for more school boards to engage with WSSDA and have their voices heard.





That time of year

REGIONAL MEETINGS OFF AND RUNNING

Following the challenging bargaining season of 2018, WSSDA conducted a listening tour during our Fall Regional Meetings. The purpose of the tour was to hear directly from our members about what the climate was like in their districts, what information or tools were helpful, and what was needed. The results of the listening tour revealed many areas of budgeting and bargaining infrastructure in school districts that need additional support. During the upcoming Spring Regional Meetings, we plan to unpack the results of the listening tour, outline the concept of a “Budgeting and Bargaining Cycle,” share the specific trainings that we are creating, and outline WSSDA’s other responses and next steps. Please register for your director area’s Spring Regional Meeting and join us for the continuation of this discussion. We’ll be looking at how we can best support you in the work of budgeting and bargaining in your district.

Altering business as usual

Meet the 2019 Equity Conference keynote speaker

Jeff Duncan-Andrade, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Raza Studies and Race and Resistance Studies at San Francisco State University, will be the keynote speaker at the fourth annual equity conference co-sponsored by WSSDA, WASA and AWSP. Duncan-Andrade lectures around the world and has authored numerous journal articles and book chapters on effective practices in schools. He has written two books and he is currently completing a third with Harvard Press. In 2015, Duncan-Andrade was tapped to be a commissioner on the National Commission on Teaching & America’s Future (NCTAF) and in 2016 was one of the educators invited to the White House on National Teacher Appreciation Day. He is also the 2019 Laureate for the prestigious Brock International Prize in Education. He has also been ranked as one of the nation’s most influential scholars by *EdWeek’s* Public Influence Rankings for the past four years. Duncan-Andrade has taught and researched effective teaching practices in schools around the world for over 23 years to provide insights to educators and school leaders on effective systems change, program building, and daily educational practices. His keynote address will provide concrete, time-honored, research-based strategies that foreground relationships, relevance, and responsibility as essential ingredients to fundamentally altering a business-as-usual approach. Through the voices of young people and educators, Duncan-Andrade’s presentation seeks to reissue license for community-responsive practices that transform engagement and educational outcomes for all children, relieving undeserved suffering in schools and communities.



Crafting a legacy

The WSSDA Board of Directors has spent the last six months working on an equity statement to guide WSSDA's work. In February the WSSDA Board unanimously approved the following statement:

“Equity is foundational to the work of WSSDA. Educational equity can only exist when a student’s level of opportunity and achievement cannot be predicted based on race, characteristics, or circumstances. Therefore, we must identify and eliminate any discriminatory beliefs, practices, and prejudices within our state’s public education system.”



Aurora Flores

IN HER OWN WORDS

“The one thing most people don’t know about me is that when I started school, I didn’t speak a word of English. I’m the oldest and my parents migrated from Mexico. I started my school career as a first-grade student, skipping kindergarten. It was hard for me to acclimate to the classroom. Even in first grade, you realize you’re different. At that time, we didn’t have the ELL classes, we didn’t have the transitional classes, we didn’t have opportunities to work with someone that could help you catch up. That helps me understand how kids coming into the system not speaking the language need different services so that when they’re in third or fourth grade, they are learning, being successful and acculturated to the classroom setting. I would certainly advise anyone new to a school board to take advantage of every opportunity for training and growth in leadership so that they’re able to go back to their school boards and their community open minded because the issues that we have are sometimes very difficult. Be involved, not just in your local school board and local director area committees, but also expand into state leadership positions to bring your local perspective to the state level.”

From the Board President



There are many educational issues that I am passionate about, but four have risen to the top of my list: equity, governance, public education advocacy and comprehensive school safety. Of those, I would like to touch upon the idea of equity by defining what it is, how we implement it and why it’s important.

To me, educational equity means that each child receives what he or she needs to develop to his or her full academic and social potential. Equity is about giving every student what they need, not giving every student the same thing. At the start of the conversation, deciding on a definition is critical and once the definition is determined, then we can move on to talk about strategies to attain it. Establishing a clear state role in educational equity is not a small task. To do this, we need to get past talking about and around equity and address it directly. Coming to terms with a definition of equity will provide the foundation for changing the strategies that will reduce the stubborn persistence of disparities in student opportunities and student-success outcomes.

Finally, why is equity even a topic of conversation? One reason is the huge change in demographics. Another, is the rise in the number of students who live in poverty. We can never be satisfied with status quo, and there’s always more we can do to level the playing field for all students. In search of an answer to the question of what type of student do we want to see graduating out of our educational system, the work needs to include implementation of equity. The work is not easy, but the work is powerful. The journey is worth it if it improves the lives of our students once they leave our schools. I will close with the words of Martin Luther King, Jr. “Change does not roll in on the wheels of inevitability but comes through continuous struggle.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Aurora Flores".

Aurora Flores, WSSDA Board President

How did your experience as a school director impact your journey to the Legislature?



“Serving as a school board director helped me learn the importance of structures to help with productive dialogues and decision making. Our school boards are non-partisan, but we all come to the table representing a variety of values and beliefs about public education. Now, in the Legislature, I find the relationship skills and collaborative approach I have learned over the years is essential.”

–Rep. Alex Ybarra (R), 13th LD

EXCERPTS FROM THEIR RESPONSES:*

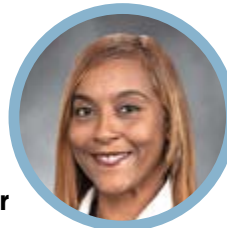
“My 7 years as a school board director helped me achieve my newly elected Senate position and I would be remiss in not saying that my 35 years in early learning, K-12 education and cross-system, cross-sector work added a breadth and depth beyond measure.”

–Sen. Claire Wilson (D), 30th LD



“It was during my time as a school board director that the disparities in our education system were highlighted for me. Now that I’m here at the Legislature, I am excited and driven to take this work to a higher level. My mission remains the same. People of color must be at the table, to ensure our voices are heard and to monitor the impact of all decisions that affect our people. My job as a legislator is to ensure that all stakeholders are at the table.”

–Rep. Melanie Morgan(D), 29th LD



“Being a school board director meant working with – and listening to – different constituencies: parents, teachers, staff, administrators, students, community and business leaders, and voters.



That taught me the importance of listening for what interests we have in common and how we might craft ideas into policy and action. When we do it right, we can turn skeptics into partners.”

–Rep. Dave Paul (R), 10th LD

“My school board experience overall has helped me grow tremendously. It has given me an inside look at the many different issues that impact our students’ capacity to learn and showed me how policy connects to practice.”

–Rep. My-Linh Thai (D), 41st LD



“As a school board director, I experienced firsthand how policy affects a child’s ability to thrive and an educator’s ability to ignite the spark in every child. The same holds true for state government. Over 50 percent of Washington’s state budget goes to education. I believe my real-world experience as a school director helps me see how policy impacts students, educators and school districts.”

–Rep. Lisa Callan (D), 5th LD





“ We had an excellent opportunity to learn about education issues at the federal level at the NSBA Advocacy Institute...with our members of Congress and high-level staffers at the Department of Education, we shared our successes, explained our challenges and advocated for the needs of our districts and students. ”

– Cindy McMullen, Chair, WSSDA Federal Relations Network

WSSDA goes to Washington (D.C.)!

In late January, a group of school directors in WSSDA's Federal Relations Network (FRN) traveled to Washington D.C. to attend NSBA's annual Advocacy Institute. The directors and WSSDA staff had the opportunity to meet with both of Washington's senators, as well as nine out of ten of Washington's House representatives. They also met with executive staff at the Department of Education to discuss key issues such as DACA/immigration, CTE, school safety and special education. All meetings were highly productive and informative. Highlights included gaining insights from NSBA on expected changes in Congress (post-midterm election) and new techniques and tools to sharpen our advocacy skills. They also heard about preparations to facilitate effective meetings with our members of Congress. "The Advocacy Institute was an amazing time to meet with our federal legislators and make the case for our legislative priorities while they are in the midst of making decisions that impact education nationally," said WSSDA President Aurora Flores.



Bellingham student, Jolette Andrade, created this portrait titled *Me and My Role Model* while in elementary school. Her art was for a unit called *Role Models and Who We Are*, demonstrating an intersection between literature, art, history, writing and social-emotional thinking.

Head's up!

Bellingham School District will be presenting a breakout session at the 2019 Equity Conference.

Got love?

A glimpse at Bellingham's approach to equity, diversity and inclusion

"All you need is love" is a notion made popular by the Beatles, but up in Bellingham, it seems to have really struck a chord.

"All kids should be loved" is line one of the Bellingham School District's core beliefs as outlined in the Bellingham Promise. Formed by hundreds of hours of community engagement with families, businesses and organizations, the Promise began taking shape in 2010, which coincided with two other significant developments for the district: hiring Dr. Greg Baker as superintendent and the school board moving toward what's called a policy governance model.

"The Bellingham Promise is really our strategic plan," said Dr Baker, superintendent of Bellingham Schools. "But we don't use that language very often. Because the promise is a moral imperative, we use words like promise or commitment." Or love...

The Promise talks about all kids, the whole child, diversity, and not only what the district will do, but what the community will do *with* the district. The first line states, "We, as a community..." In effect, the Bellingham Promise serves as a blueprint for growth of the entire community founded on principles of equity, diversity and inclusion.

One of the district's key strategies for realizing the Promise is a focus on early learning. Back in 2010, one of the first equity issues tackled by the district was access to full-day kindergarten, years before it was funded by the state.

"Like many districts, we had a half-time kindergarten for many and then full-time kindergarten for some," said Baker. "And the some were either the families that could afford it or the families that were lucky enough to get on the list to have either Headstart, ECAP, state or federal funding. And then there were a huge group of kids in the middle. This was a huge equity issue."

With support of the board, in the second half of the superintendent's first year, all Title 1 elementary schools began offering full-time kindergarten. The following year, all schools moved to full time.

Another key strategy in the pursuit of equity is the one schoolhouse approach. The promise here is that the district will provide an equitable distribution of resources and services for all students. To help achieve that, The Promise encourages everyone to think of the district as a single school. The idea is that this notion is unifying, which helps the community focus on *all* students.



Above, School board director Kelly Bashaw (center) meets with families during a school board community linkage in Oct. 2018.

"If we were one school," said Baker, "people would really get that you've got to take care of each other, that it wouldn't be okay if one part of the school is struggling and another part is excelling and gets all the resources."

And speaking of resources, one of Bellingham's initiatives launched in 2011 is called Project Free Education. Bellingham lists full-time kindergarten as falling under the umbrella of this program, which seeks to end the practice of asking families to pay for school supplies, extra course fees, field trips and even violins for fifth graders in the reinstated strings music program.

"When you add it all up, we've saved over \$1 million for our families," said Jacqueline Brawley, executive director of communications and community relations. "Our goal is to provide a free and public education, so once you start peeling back the different layers of the onion, you realize that we're asking families to pay for a lot of things."

One thing schools typically ask families for at the start of a school year is to buy school supplies. Bellingham's homeless student coordinators observed that many families struggle to meet that request, so they brought their concern forward. The district looked at the data and found another equity issue.

"The data showed that we asked our families, before even the first day of school, to go spend money," said Baker. "It ranged from \$18 at one school to \$240 at another school. And there was a strong correlation that the higher the poverty school, the more they were being asked to go buy supplies. This discovery led us on a journey of unpacking all the hidden costs of what's supposed to be a free and appropriate education."

In light of this realization, the district stopped asking families at all grade levels to buy school supplies.

Another step in Bellingham's equity journey is the board's consideration of developing an equity policy. Here too, the Bellingham Promise is a factor. When asked why the board was considering a new policy, board member Doug Benjamin has stated, "The Bellingham Promise makes references to 'every child' or 'all children' three times. Every child means every child. If anyone is marginalized, in any way, we are not consistent with The Promise vision."

Below, School board director Doug Benjamin with Whatcom Middle School seventh grader Aili Vanyo. Her art was featured on an appreciation card for School Board Appreciation Month in January. Bottom left, Superintendent Baker with families at the 1st annual South Asian Party. Bottom right, Students pass through the halls at Shuksan Middle School.



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"The Bellingham Promise makes references to 'every child' or 'all children' three times. Every child means every child. If anyone is marginalized, in any way, we are not consistent with The Promise vision."

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“If we were one school,” said Baker, “people would really get that you’ve got to take care of each other, that it wouldn’t be okay if one part of the school is struggling and another part is excelling and gets all the resources.”



But how does the board make progress as it considers taking such a significant step? “It’s hard to have that discussion in an everyday school board meeting,” said Board President Camille Diaz Hackler. “To be effective at visioning, like at a retreat, you need to be able to work from a place of trust and understanding of your fellow board members.”

One way the board works on building trust is by dedicating time to simply have conversations with each other. “We found that when we go to the WSSDA Annual Conference, we’re exposed to a lot of ideas and have the time to just sit down together over dinner and have conversations. That’s something we’ve tried to recreate here in Bellingham by having dinner at local restaurants.”

That solution may not work for every board, but so far it has for Bellingham. Per the Open Public Meetings Act, the district puts out notice when the board schedules a dinner, and anyone is welcome to come.

Conversations, or deep dialogue, are how the Bellingham Promise came into existence in the first place. Lengthy and numerous

discussions with families, businesses and organizations helped hone ideas, develop understanding and build trust among all participants. As leadership coach Susan Scott said, “The conversation is the relationship.”

The foundation of all relationships in the Bellingham school district goes back to line one of the community’s core beliefs that “all children should be loved.” However, calling that out in a strategic plan took a little getting used to. Apparently, not every district staff person was doing what kindergarten teachers were already used to—telling their students every day that they love them. “For a while, the word love was a tension point,” said Baker, “until I met with a group of high school students.”

The district has a student advisory committee that consults with the superintendent. A junior and senior from each of Bellingham’s four high schools are on the committee. Dr. Baker went to the group and explained the tension around the word love, and he asked for their advice.

“We went around the table and each one of them said ‘we know when adults in our schools and the community love us and when they don’t. It makes an impact and we think you should keep it in there.’ Once I told that story, the tension was gone. The students had been heard, and it became our very first core value.”

Above left, Superintendent Baker, community members and school board directors Camille Diaz Hackler and Kelly Bashaw hammer golden nails in for the Central Kitchen groundbreaking ceremony. Top right: A snapshot from the video “What is The Bellingham Promise?” Bottom right: School board director Quenby Peterson, Options High School Principal Byron Gerard and teacher Meghan Dunham during a school board visit in Oct. 2018.

Notification of juvenile offenders: **Comprehensive change needed**

by Abigail Westbrook

Here in WSSDA's Policy and Legal Services department, we've prioritized being responsive to the policy issues identified in audits conducted by the State Auditor's Office (SAO) involving response to notification of juvenile offenders. In fact, we revised the pertinent model policies both last August and December. Nevertheless, comprehensive improvement will require statutory change. The good news is that statutory change appears to be in process.

Background During the past two decades, our Legislature passed numerous bills requiring courts, state agencies, and county sheriffs to notify schools and districts of student criminal offenses. Similarly, our Legislature has passed various bills requiring districts and school principals to take action on the information received.

In May 2018, the SAO issued a performance audit examining whether state agencies, courts, and sheriffs notified schools of registered juvenile sex or kidnapping offenders. That audit found gaps and breakdowns in the notification processes to schools. Courts and agencies acted immediately to remedy a number of identified issues. However, the report noted that the remaining barriers transcended the effort of the agencies and recommended that our Legislature convene a stakeholder work group to address the problems. The group has since been assembled and started its work.

The SAO then began a second audit, this time examining what happens to the notifications after principals and district officials received them. In August 2018, the SAO gave WSSDA some initial feedback. The SAO noticed that many of the principals

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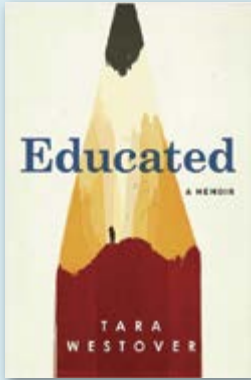
“During the past two decades, our Legislature passed numerous bills requiring courts, state agencies, and county sheriffs to notify schools and districts of student criminal offenses.”





Book Review

Brenda Rogers reviews *Educated* by Tara Westover



I grabbed this book because one of my daughters told me I should read it and then we could talk. I wouldn't pass up an opportunity like that, so read it I did, and right away.

The author is a young woman who was raised in the mountains of Idaho by survivalist parents who did not want their children exposed to the government through the filing of birth certificates, attendance at

public schools, or even interaction with medical doctors or hospitals. That the author and two of her brothers managed to self-educate, be accepted into prestigious universities and even earn doctorates is thought-provoking.

The narrative leads us through this family's preparation for the end times, while they earn a living running a salvage business and practicing midwifery and herbalism. The children apparently received very little actual instruction at home although obviously they learned to read. The author describes some horrifying accidents that her family endured without seeking medical attention.

Although much of this memoir is related to one family's interactions, strengths, weaknesses and inevitable dysfunction, for those of us who spend most of our waking hours thinking about public education it brings up even more subjects to muse over.

I found myself thinking a great deal about the difference in teaching a child subject matter versus teaching the skills related to self-guided learning and how those skills will be even more important in a rapidly evolving technology environment where we are not really sure what knowledge and skills the jobs of the future will require. And the "future" is not very far off. And as usual, I did a deep dive in thinking about how our system can offer character building, behavioral, social and emotional support to all of our students without being inappropriately intrusive and alienating those we most want to help.

There is a lot to think about on these pages. Tell someone you love to read this book and then you can talk. It'll be great!

ABOUT THE REVIEWER

Brenda Rogers serves as president of the Bethel School District Board of Directors where she is in her sixteenth year. She has served WSSDA on the resolutions and legislative committees and is currently the president-elect of the WSSDA Board of Directors.



“The underlying problem with the notifications system is that it is a patchwork of legal requirements rather than a holistic system.”

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interviewed reported confusion and concern about the scope of their duty to share information about students' criminal offenses. For example, some principals were confused about whether they needed to share the information with all of the students' teachers and were concerned that sharing information might violate students' confidentiality.

At the time, the audit was still ongoing, but we took immediate steps toward supporting districts by revising two of the model policies. Last fall, after the SAO issued its final report, we made some additional revisions.¹ The report noted that WSSDA had acted immediately to improve its model policies. In fact, we were fortunate to have cultivated this line of communication with the SAO and be as proactive as possible to support school districts. However, as noted above, a comprehensive solution requires revision to statute.



The underlying problem with the notifications system is that it is a patchwork of legal requirements rather than a holistic system. Most of the requirements make sense when considered in isolation, but taken together, they create the need for numerous notifications that ultimately risk creating confusion, and increasing the likelihood that important information will go unnoticed.

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¹ You can find revised Model Policy 3143 – District Notification of Juvenile Offenders and Model Policy and Procedure 3144 – Release of Information Concerning Student Sexual and Kidnapping Offenders in Model Online Policy or wssda.org/FeaturedPolicies. You can also learn more about these issues in the December 2018 issue of *Policy & Legal News*.

Currently, state law lists more than 330 different criminal offenses that courts must communicate to schools. If the courts, state agencies, and law enforcement fully complied with the requirements, this would result in about 11,000 notifications a year to schools, including notifications for students who are not going to return to school at all, as well as notifications to schools the students are not going to attend anymore (though they may attend elsewhere).

Compounding the issue of extraneous notification is that districts are currently required to relay all of the estimated 11,000 annual notifications to all of the students' teachers and to the next schools the students attend throughout their academic careers, without an expiration on the requirement. This means that for a student who, in the fifth grade, entered into a diversion agreement to perform community service and receive counseling in lieu of adjudication for underage possession of alcohol, and who then fulfills that diversion agreement during seventh grade, the district's requirement to relay the notification to every teacher has not and does not expire.

Further, although not within the scope of the SAO's audits, their findings raise concerns with respect to racial equity. As data shows, minority populations are disproportionately involved with law enforcement and the judicial system. Therefore, a system of unexpiring, negative notifications could potentially have a deleterious effect on students' relationships with teachers and schools throughout their scholastic career. Staff here at WSSDA are looking forward to working closely with the legislative work group as it considers limiting some of the statutory requirements for information sharing.

“ Currently, state law lists more than 330 different criminal offenses that courts must communicate to schools. If the courts, state agencies, and law enforcement fully complied with the requirements, this would result in about 11,000 notifications a year to schools... ”



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Student VOICE

WHY STUDENT VOICE IS KEY TO STUDENT SUCCESS by Lori Oviatt

According to Wikipedia, student voice is the individual and collective perspectives and actions of students within the context of learning and education. It is identified in schools as both a metaphorical practice and as a pragmatic concern.

In the video, *Why Student Voice is Important** students said, “the importance of student voice is being heard and being involved. It is a win-win situation.” They also point out that “with engagement comes higher graduation rates, lower drop out rates, and lower absenteeism rates,” both of which address keys to student success.

Student involvement teaches democracy by giving students the experience of practicing the complexity of political decision-making in a pluralistic society. Their involvement also helps develop leadership skills. At Federal Hocking High School, the number of college-bound students engaged in student governance increased from 20 to 70 percent. This shows that by giving students more responsibility and showing confidence in them, they’re motivated to challenge themselves and grow even more.

Student involvement can also significantly improve a district’s and school’s quality of decision-making because students offer perspectives that are otherwise lost from that process.

Today, students can join the boards of school districts and even the State Board of Education, but cannot vote on either. Methods to select student representatives vary across the state. At the 2018 WSSDA Annual Conference, more than 40 students attended, representing 22 school districts. You can see, we have some work to do in order to add more student representatives to our boards.

If you’d like to move in that direction, here are some suggestions:

- Create a student advisory group, considering all age levels
- Conduct student roundtables on topics of interest
- Consider lending a student voice’s to curriculum decisions
- Add a standing agenda item to your board meetings on student presentations
- Create student committees to work on key areas of educational importance and then invite them to present to the board

* <https://studentsatthecenterhub.org/resource/why-is-student-voice%20-important-in-education-video/>



ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Lori Oviatt serves on the Riverview Board of Directors and is an active Riverview School District volunteer and community member. She also serves in several state associations and on WSSDA’s Interscholastic Activities Committee.

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— Marti Kline, Iowa Association of School Boards

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Co-designing for justice in family-school-community partnerships

While non dominant families and communities can make powerful contributions to leading change in education, family-school relations today are too often limited by traditional power dynamics.

A new paper by researchers with the University of Washington-based Family Leadership Design Collaborative outlines a new, solidarity-driven process of partnership between communities of color, educators and researchers toward community-defined well being and educational justice. Recently published in the *Journal of Family Diversity in Education*, the paper explores how “community design circles” can put families and communities of color at the center of transforming educational practice and research.

In a new podcast, UW College of Education doctoral students Aditi Rajendran and Charlene Montañó Nolan discuss how community design circles can build capacity for social dreaming and change making, lessons for communities and educators engaged in school-community-research partnerships and more.

“Community design circles became these in-depth, reciprocal working groups where we engaged stories and experiences and knowledge and expertise of our communities towards action,” Rajendran said.

In one example where community design circles were implemented in Southeast Seattle to think about how to support Chinese immigrant and Chinese-American families, Nolan noted there was a profound difference in the depth of engagement that was possible for members of the community.

“What we heard in the first design circle was that a lot of the families had never been asked what their dreams were,” Nolan said. “And when they had been asked what their dreams were, most of [the families] really felt committed to their children succeeding academically but also being comfortable in their Chinese-American identity and feeling like they could fluidly move in whatever community they wanted to. So there was this reclaiming of their cultural identity in that social dreaming.”

Rajendran and Nolan co-authored “Community Design Circles: Co-designing Justice and Wellbeing in Family-Community-Research Partnerships” with Ann Ishimaru, associate professor of education at the UW, and Megan Bang, professor of learning sciences at Northwestern University. Rajendran and Nolan are research assistants with the Family Leadership Design Collaborative, a national network whose work centers racial equity in family engagement.

Subscribe to the UW College of Education on SoundCloud to listen to more interviews with researchers, practitioners, community leaders and policymakers who are working to transform inequitable systems of education and make learning come alive for all students.

This article originally appeared at the University of Washington College of Education website.



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221 College Street NE.
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