

# Association of Washington Student Leaders (AWSL)



2023-2024

## Member Guide

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# ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON STUDENT LEADERS

*A division of the Association of Washington School Principals*

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The Association of Washington Student Leaders is a part of the  
Washington School Principals Education Foundation (WSPEF)  
*a 501(c)(3) foundation established by AWSP*

## **WSPEF The foundation for WA schools, their students, and leaders.**

We believe children at all grade levels have the potential to become leaders in their neighborhoods, schools, and communities. Through social/emotional learning and STEAM, we approach the needs of the whole child, striving to support and improve their growth in the social and academic domains.

Time spent in the out-of-doors at our Cispus Learning Center connects children with the environment, helping them develop the mindset of stewardship and conservation. As students learn about their place in the natural world, they also discover a future for themselves as advocates, organizers, and those who find their life's calling in environmental work.

Our practices are planned, implemented, and evaluated through justice, equity, and inclusion lenses. Just as diversity is an indicator of environmental health, it is how we judge our organization's health as well. We are purposeful in developing students as leaders, helping them find the power of their voices. We encourage and support them as they become influences for good in their communities, cultures, and, ultimately, the world.



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The Association of Washington Student Leaders empowers students to lead and make positive change within their schools, communities, and themselves. Through life-changing and affordable programs, curriculum, and experiences, AWSL prepares students for success in academics and life. AWSL is the Washington State leader in **Student Engagement, Student Empowerment, and Student Voice**.

## Our Why:

We are committed to investing in people, developing programs, elevating student voice, and strengthening the belief that all students can lead.

We endeavor to create opportunities and increase access, so each and every student can participate and lead. Analyzing school programs and offerings through a J.E.D.I. (Justice, Equity, Diversity, Inclusion) and social-emotional learning lens can lead to changes that increase student participation and engagement, especially from underrepresented student groups.

## AWSL Supports Schools By:

- Creating opportunities for students to lead, represent, and reflect the school's demographics.
- Developing multiple opportunities and access points for all students to lead.
- Promoting the idea that all students can learn to lead, just like all students can learn math, English, social studies, and other content areas.

## What we do:

### Developing Leaders

We go beyond training and empowering student leaders. We train and empower (each and every) students to lead. Our goal is to provide access and opportunities for each and every student through the lens of justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

### Something for Everyone

We provide supportive, proactive, and responsive programs, curriculum, and experiences for pre-K to college students and the staff who lead, teach and advise them.

### Quality & Meaningful Work

We commit to our programs, curriculum, and experiences will be high-quality, relevant, and meaningful for each and every individual. We focus on the whole person – helping individuals build awareness and skills in establishing relationships, setting goals, managing emotions, making responsible decisions, and practicing resiliency.

### Fun, Hope, and Joy

At AWSL, we want our learners to enjoy the process of learning. That's why we focus on fun, joy, and hope. You should enjoy your time with us, see new possibilities for yourself and others, and leave ready to apply new knowledge, confidence, and skills to your future.

# Opportunity and Access: *Living our mission*

## **AWSL Mission:**

Providing opportunities that support and increase the academic and social success of each and every student.

## **What is the Opportunity Gap?**

The opportunity gap is created by the unequal or inequitable distribution of resources and opportunities. Just as an academic education gap in schools marked by disproportional achievement among student demographic groups, there is an opportunity gap in student activities. In short, not all student demographic groups are equitably represented in many student activity programs. A step toward equity starts with acknowledging that there are still structural issues with institutionalized racism, sexism, disparate educational opportunities, and oppressed treatment experienced by students of color or groups not in the majority.

## **Dismantling Barriers**

Access to opportunities for students and families is imperative to achieving academic and social success. Therefore, supporting schools in examining and dismantling historical and institutional policies and practices that inhibit student engagement and participation is at the forefront of AWSL's work.

## **AWSL believes opportunities happen when participants can:**

- **ACCESS** expertise inside and out of the group
- **PARTICIPATE** in authentic and meaningful activities
- **PRACTICE** using relevant problems of practice
- **ENGAGE** with others formally and informally
- **APPLY** new learning to contexts.
- **REFLECT** on leadership and new learnings.

"Every system is perfectly designed to get the results it gets."

—Dr. Paul Batalden, health care system innovator

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## **AWSL Belief Statement**

AWSL believes that every student and adult can lead in their school.

To promote positive social and academic experiences for all, our focus provides opportunities, support, and resources to:

- Examine, interrupt and address patterns of historical and current oppression.
- Engage, connect, and collaborate with others.
- Create safe schools where all are valued.
- Feel successful in school and life.

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## Students and the AWSP Leadership Framework

*School leadership is principals, teacher leaders, and students working collaboratively to create the world's best school environment. The AWSP Leadership Framework is the foundation for this collaboration. Working independently only perpetuates ineffective systems. Working interdependently makes the impossible possible.*

Dr. Scott Seaman, Executive Director, Association of Washington School Principals

Students are an important part of a school's leadership team. Principals foster success by working to achieve excellence in eight defined areas in the Leadership Framework. Students can also be doing positive work in these areas. Though the approaches might be different, the goals are the same: all students in the school achieve academic and social success. With students actively involved, the Leadership Framework becomes the foundation for everything that happens in a school.

Framework Criteria	What Principals are asked to do...	What students can be doing...
Creating A Culture	Advocate nurtures and sustains a school culture and instructional program that is welcoming, built on mutual trust, and promotes student learning and professional staff growth.	Create a place where kids <i>want</i> to come to school instead of <i>having</i> to go to school. Partner with school leaders to establish a school climate where everyone is supported, included, and can develop to their full potential.
Ensuring School Safety	Supporting the community (both in and out of school) to develop a more nuanced/expanded understanding of what it means to be safe.	Support school leaders in establishing a school environment where kids are physically, socially, and emotionally safe both in and outside the school's internal environment.
Planning With Data	Lead the development, implementation, and evaluation of the data-driven plan for increasing student achievement.	Be attentive to your environment and reach out to your principal at any time. Establish a more connected relationship with principals to communicate better regarding school systems, policies, and concerns.
Aligning Curriculum	Assuring "what" is taught not only aligns with standards and goals but is appropriately rigorous and culturally responsive to students being taught.	Support the classroom environment by being an empowered knowledge producer. Support educators and the education experience while being curious about content and curriculum.
Improving Instruction	Monitoring, assisting and evaluating effective instruction and assessment practices.	Engage with lessons taught in class. Treat those instructing your class with compassion. Lead by example to foster a positive academic identity at your school.
Managing Resources	Managing both staff and fiscal resources to support student achievement and legal responsibilities.	Manage student body funds responsibly, openly, and transparently. Ensure that all stakeholders are included in decision-making regarding student body funds and are invested in ensuring that all fiscal resources are utilized to their fullest potential.
Engaging Families and Communities	Partnering with families and communities to promote learning. Partnering with families, connecting with underserved families, and fostering community connections.	Make the community feel proud that you are the future. Help your principal create opportunities for positive interaction between the school and members of the community.
Closing the Gap	Demonstrate a commitment to closing the opportunity and achievement gaps, identifying barriers that could contribute to the proliferation of gaps, and creating and implementing effective plans that target those barriers.	We believe that students can advocate for equitable opportunities and access points to promote all students' success regardless of circumstance, environment, or background.



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## Principals Partnering with Students

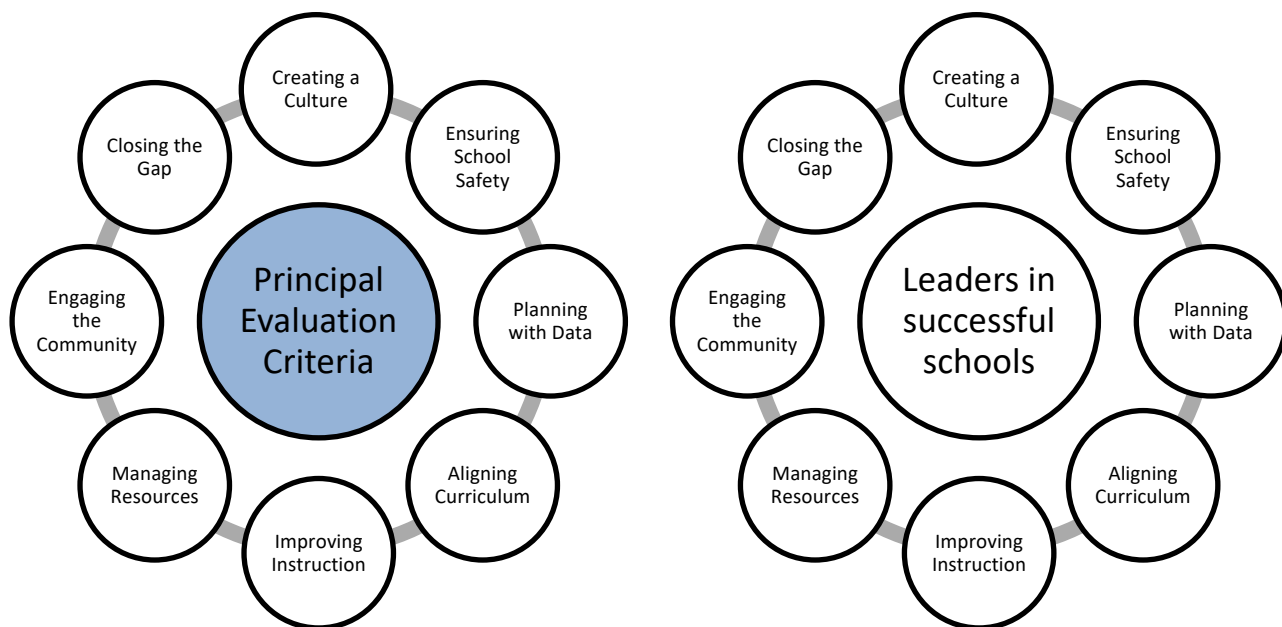
*When students know their work is focused around the same framework as the principals, they are able to provide the very best options for their peers that align with our work as adults.*

Anecia Grigsby, Assistant Principal, Sammamish High School, Bellevue School District

In the early registration brochures for summer camp in the 1950s, a message from the principals reads: "Washington high school summer workshops are made possible through all the secondary school principals' combined efforts throughout the state. They believe in and foster student participation through the student council." Thus, students were placed in a system where they participated in student council to plan their activities while the principal managed the school. By the 1970s, a new paradigm beyond student participation was born out of the Vietnam war and youth movement: **student voice**. When 18–20-year-olds around the country rallied to pass the 26th amendment, their main argument was that if they were old enough to fight in a war, they were old enough to vote on the representatives sending them to war. Students in schools continued to participate, but they now could provide input into the school system. Their opinions on school issues were solicited, and what they said mattered.

### So what is the role of students as leaders now?

If we push forward on the evolving arc of student involvement utilizing the AWSP Leadership Framework, the new paradigm is a partner in educational outcomes. A simple rephrasing of a graphic brings this point to light.



We are teaching this sleight-of-hand graphic to students that participate in one of our AWSL programs and trainings. It is now the main staple of our curriculum. We explain that students, just like principals, are building leaders. The words principals use to explain one of the criteria might differ, and what they decide to do might be different from what students choose to do. Yet, the question is the same: how can schools help every student achieve academic and social success by creating a culture, ensuring school safety, planning with data, aligning curriculum, improving instruction, managing resources, engaging the community, and closing the gap?

## Opportunities – Resources – Knowledge – Savings

Since 1956, AWSL has served principals in Washington state to empower students to lead. We have continued to grow our programs and our service to you and your buildings throughout that time. We continue to work towards opportunities and access for each student (and staff) in your buildings in today's times.

Please help us to continue this work by renewing/enrolling as a member of AWSL!

### Member Benefits:

- Subscription to *Building Leaders*, our electronic newsletter. Each issue highlights upcoming program opportunities, practical activities, helpful adviser resources, and timely tips. Priority status for member questions
- Discounts on leadership training programs for student leaders, including Washington State Summer Leadership Camps for students in middle-level and high schools, Summer CheerLeadership Camps, Middle-Level Regional Workshops, *ASB Practices in a Virtual World* (finance course), and the annual Association of Washington Student Leaders Fall Leadership Conference. Access to various leadership resources is available through the AWSL Leadership Library.
- Eligibility for AWSL Recognition and Award programs, including Adviser of the Year.
- Resources and support to our work on Equity, Opportunity, and Access allow all students to recognize their ability to learn and break down barriers to success in student leadership programs.
- Access and support for work in social-emotional learning through our programs and resources at a discounted price
- Access to various leadership resources is available through the AWSL Leadership Library.
- Copies of special publications produced during the year.
- Discounts on training programs for activity advisers sponsored by the Association of Washington Student Leaders.
- **NEW FOR 2023-2024:** Elementary schools receive our module-based SEL program, **Calling All Superheroes**, with membership! **AWSL Find Your Vision** program is included in the Leadership Library as part of the membership!

Please contact our Operations Director, Heather Muir ([heather@awsleaders.org](mailto:heather@awsleaders.org)) regarding any questions concerning your building's membership.