

POSITION PROFILE



Executive Director Washington State School Directors' Association Olympia, Washington

The Washington State School Directors' Association (commonly known as WSSDA) is seeking an accomplished, dynamic leader to serve as its next Executive Director. Headquartered in Olympia, WSSDA is the largest association of elected officials in Washington, and represents every school board member in all of the state's 295 public school districts. The new Executive Director will have the exciting opportunity to lead the organization in expanding its role in education policy development and advocacy, as well as its ongoing role of providing leadership development and support to local school boards throughout Washington.

Overview of the Organization

Locally elected school boards are at the heart of the public education system in Washington State. School boards serve as a vital link between the community and the classroom — making policy, setting budgets, and exerting leadership to prepare our children for the opportunities of the future. Founded in 1922 as a state agency, WSSDA is authorized by the State Legislature to be self-governed through a president and board of directors elected from the state's local school boards.

The Association was recently awarded the 2010 Shannon Award by the National School Boards Association (NSBA) for their participation in the five-state Target for Student Learning project. The Shannon Award is the most prestigious award given by NSBA for team participation.

WSSDA's core mission is focused on promoting student learning by ensuring that school board members have the knowledge, tools, and services they need to effectively govern their districts and to champion public education.

To that end, WSSDA is:

- A leader in promoting effective governance by school directors through professional development and leadership programs, policy briefings, strategic planning services, and legal research;
- An advocate for public education and student achievement at the local, state and national levels; and
- A comprehensive network through which school board members learn from each other, keep abreast of policy and legal developments in education, and share successful practices and innovative ideas.

WSSDA's primary services to its members include: Board Training & Professional Development, Policy & Legal Services, Strategic Planning, Information Resources & Issue Briefings, Advocacy, and Conferences and Regional Meetings

The Association currently has an operating budget of 2.9 million dollars and 17 full-time, and two part-time, staff.

Core Values

WSSDA believes:

- Public education is vital to our country's democratic way of life and local school boards are vital to the success of public education.
- Quality schools require ethical, effective governance and transformational leadership in order to maximize student learning.
- School directors are the Association's primary customers. They are best served through an innovative, professional and flexible organization which provides exceptional training and services in advocacy, governance and leadership.
- The Association is uniquely positioned and empowered by statute to provide training and services that are consistent with the roles and responsibilities of school directors.
- High functioning local school boards have a positive impact on the learning and development of each student.





Stakeholders

The primary stakeholders of the Association are its members; the WSSDA staff and Board of Directors, the office of the Washington State Governor; local, district, and state school administrators; state legislators and members of the Washington Congressional delegation, and their staffs; the National School Boards Association; as well as numerous other education-related associations and organizations throughout the state.

Organizational Strengths and Recent Accomplishments

- WSSDA actively provides ongoing advocacy on education issues and legislation
- WSSDA provides many key, value-added services to local boards including: Leadership training and development, legislative updates and communication alerts on other issues, policy templates, Board Docs (a paperless meeting service), superintendent search, legal services, web-based training and advocacy tools as well as the use of social media
- The Association’s professional staff is strong, cohesive, long-tenured, talented, has substantial subject matter expertise, and is very responsive to members
- WSSDA provides high quality conferences for local school board members such as its annual conference, legislative assembly and annual legislative conference, which is provided in collaboration with the Washington Association of School Administrators
- Because all school board members are automatically members of WSSDA, the association is able to speak for, and connect to, all districts
- WSSDA has developed a set of governing standards for school boards
- The Association is on good financial footing and has solid financial administration; their budget is balanced
- WSSDA has maintained its partnership with the State Board of Education
- Representatives of the State Board of Education and the Superintendent of Public Instruction’s office consistently attend WSSDA Board meetings
- WSSDA has partnerships with other education-related associations and organizations, and has good political connections

- The Association has a willingness to consider new and different ways of thinking about solutions to education issues
- The Board has developed a long-range strategic plan and is planning for its upcoming update/revision
- The Association completed an “Achievement Gap” study and launched a Student Achievement Task Force, which developed a Data Dashboard tool to assist school directors in their data-based decision-making processes
- They have also launched the Lighthouse Project – an intensive data-based governance training process for school boards.

Challenges and Opportunities for the Future

The following have been identified by the WSSDA Board as the most pressing issues facing the Association in the future.

Near-Term:

- Demonstrating the value and relevance of WSSDA programs and services to all local boards
- Ensuring a smooth transition for the new Executive Director and overcoming any organizational uncertainty during the leadership transition; establishing trust between the new Executive Director, staff, board, and membership;
- Re-establishing the visibility and leadership role of the Executive Director and the Association with members; creating strong, transparent, collaborative relationships and credibility with partner associations and other external stakeholders, while addressing their concerns
- Balancing and representing the wide variety of perspectives within the membership and board; achieving consensus on major issues
- Increasing WSSDA’s advocacy and leadership on legislative and non-legislative issues
- Helping the Board and staff continue to take a big picture view for the Association, but becoming more innovative, proactive and nimble in decision making





- Ensuring the appropriate balance of roles and responsibilities between the Board (governance, policy making and long-range strategic development) and staff (policy implementation and agency operations); providing adequate board member orientation and governance training to ensure ongoing understanding of these distinctions
- Improving the agency’s internal culture, openness and internal communication. ensuring that staff’s efforts are being effectively focused on strategic priorities
- Strengthening the board as a team
- Addressing the recommendations from the recent NSBA program and operations review

Long-Term:

- Continuing to increase the visibility and leadership of the Executive Director and the Association with members; continue building and maintaining strong, responsive, collaborative relationships and credibility (i.e. no surprises) with partner associations (at state and national levels) and other external stakeholders, and addressing their concerns; becoming “first-of-mind” when policymakers are seeking input about, and/or participation in, education-related policy development or committees focused on public education issues.
- Continuing to maintain the appropriate balance of roles and responsibilities between Board (governance, policy making and long-range strategic development) and staff (policy implementation and agency operations)
- Continuing to increase the WSSDA’s ability to be proactive, rather than reactive, to funding and other legislative issues
- Continuing to improve the value and relevance of WSSDA programs and services to all local boards,
- Diversifying funding by becoming more entrepreneurial - substantially increase non-dues revenue by developing new sponsors, launching fundraising initiatives and fee-for-service products and programs that have proven successful in other state school board associations
- Maintaining the Association’s full membership status and resolving the issue of whether or not to remain a State Agency
- The new Executive Director firmly establishing him/herself as the strong leader of the association

- Developing and recommending new ideas for solutions to problems
- Focusing on the “essential few” things that the Association can do really well rather than trying to be all things to all people; mobilize the membership and staff around key priorities where they can be most effective
- Promoting the documented linkage between highly functioning local boards and improved student achievement
- Creating ways to take, and advocate for, positions on policy issues in the face of the wide diversity of viewpoints among members
- Developing a new or updated strategic plan for the Association; ensuring focus on the core mission
- Helping members see beyond the boundaries of their individual districts to view issues from a broader perspective
- Continuing to improve the organization’s nimbleness in decision-making
- Increasing the internal capacity of the Association to serve the membership more broadly
- Assisting local boards to prepare for continued budget reductions due to declines in state revenues.
- Engaging more local school boards in professional development
- Developing a greater willingness to “push the envelope” farther on issues of advocacy and accountability

For more detailed information about the WSSDA, please visit their web site: <http://wssda.org>.

The Position

Responsibilities

The Executive Director reports to the President of the 17-member Board of Directors. Board members are elected for three year terms by the membership, while the officers are elected for one year terms. The Executive Director leads the Association toward its mission; is





responsible for the effective conduct and management of Association affairs; recommends and participates in the Board's development of Association goals, objectives and policies; organizes, coordinates, and directs staff and activities for the Association; and acts as its primary spokesperson.

For a detailed description of the Executive Director's responsibilities, please see the Appendix.

Compensation & Benefits

The salary for the position is competitive, commensurate with qualifications and experience.

WSSDA is covered under the State of Washington employee benefit package. Benefits include:

- Comprehensive Medical/Dental/Vision care insurance (Multiple plan options available)
- Deferred Compensation plan
- Retirement plan (through the Washington State Public Retirement System)
- Life, Long-term Disability and AD&D Insurance (cost dependent on coverage)
- Flexible Spending Account
- 11 paid holidays annually
- Vacation (to be determined in employment contract; can be accrued up to a maximum of 240 hours)
- Sick leave accrued at 8 hours per month

Diversity Focus

The staff, members and other stakeholders of WSSDA are from wide and diverse socio-economic, ethnic and cultural backgrounds. A demonstrated commitment to, and understanding of, diversity and cultural competency will be critical in the selection process.

Leadership Philosophy Required

The Executive Director must provide visionary leadership, inspire staff and Board members to do their best work, create, as well as identify, strategic opportunities for the Association, and serve as the "face of the organization" to its many stakeholders. The Executive Director

has wide latitude in exercising independent initiative and judgment, subject to the policies and procedures established by the Board of Directors.

The new Executive Director must be free of any affiliations that could conflict (or could create the appearance of conflict) with the exercise of his/her responsibilities.

Working Relationships

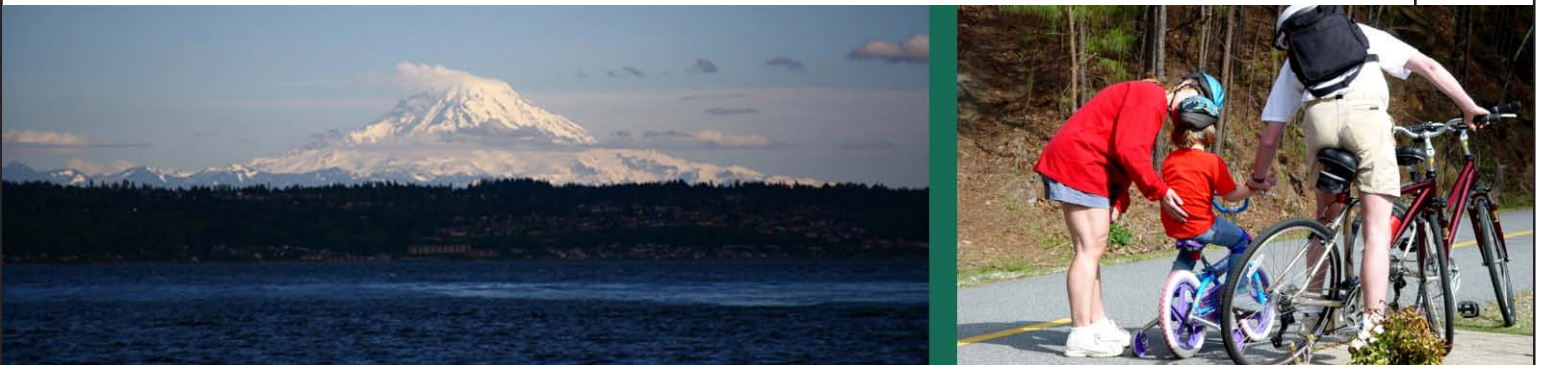
The Executive Director interacts with the following persons/groups on a regular basis. A collaborative approach and a professional public presence are essential.

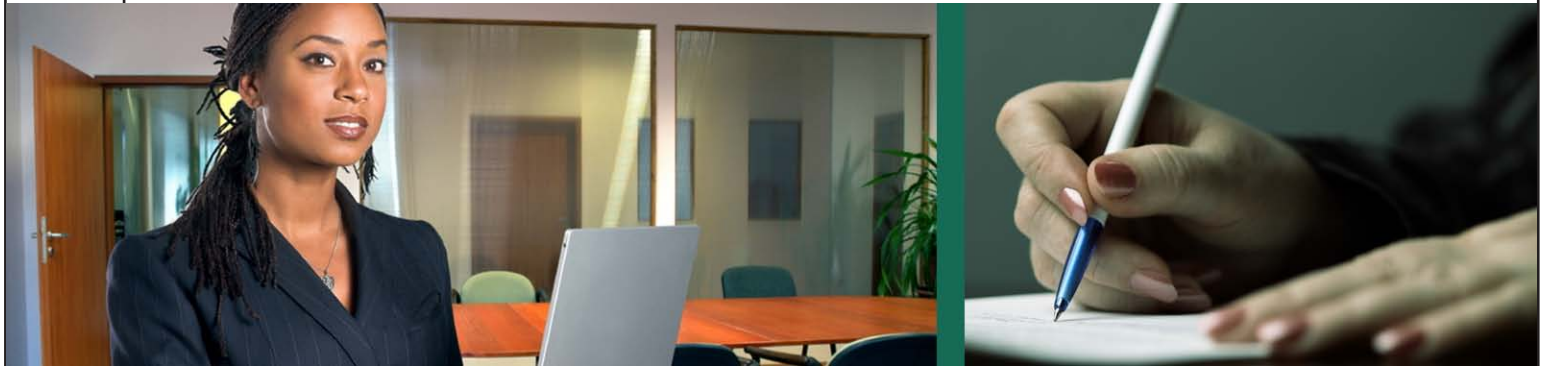
- Board of Directors
- All Association staff
- Members (Local School Directors)
- Local, regional, statewide, and national education-related organizations and associations
- Leaders of school board associations in other states, as well as leaders of the National School Board Association
- Local, district and state education administrators
- Members of the State Legislature and the Washington State Congressional delegation, and their staffs
- Representative of the Governor's office
- News media
- Members of the general public

Immediate Areas of Focus for the New Executive Director

The following areas have been identified by the Board of Directors as the highest priorities for measuring the success of the new Executive Director during his/her first 12 months in office:

- Mutually agreed-to performance expectations (between the new Executive Director and Board) are in place and being met
- The new Executive Director has achieved a firm grasp of the issues facing the Association and the State's education system and is able to articulate a clear picture of WSSDA's direction for the future





- The new Executive Director has built, and continues to build, strong, respectful relationships with members, other education-related associations and partner organizations, stakeholders, and legislators; feedback from them is positive; there have been no surprises to the Board or the Association’s partners
- The New Executive Director is visible and engaged in, and respected by, the greater education community
- Respectful, open, trusting relationships have been established between new Executive Director, Board and staff; the new Executive Director has “taken ownership” of the organization
- There is a sense of confidence, both internally and externally, that the Association is headed in the right direction
- Communication among and between the staff has improved both vertically and horizontally
- WSSDA’s positive influence on education policies and issues is more widely recognized and forceful; WSSDA is “at the table” as a key player in the development of the State’s education policies
- The Association’s focus is on its mission and its strategic plan; the organization is operating smoothly and effectively
- Innovative, new ideas are being presented to the Board
- The Executive Director and staff are working well as a cohesive team; staff members feel recognized and valued for their contributions; staff cross-training has been implemented
- The Association has demonstrated its responsiveness to members’ needs
- Internal strengths and challenges of the association have been evaluated and are being addressed
- The Board is unified and is working harmoniously as a team with the Executive Director toward a common vision; the Board is focused on its governance role and the Executive Director is managing the agency.
- The number of member boards of all sizes using WSSDA services and products has increased
- The Executive Director understands that “student achievement” must be considered in the broadest sense, not merely measured by higher test scores

Candidate Requirements

A Bachelor's degree or commensurate experience in a related field is required; a Master's degree or equivalent experience is preferred

The position requires demonstrated skill, experience, and success in/with the following areas:

- As an Executive Director or senior manager in a similar or larger organization, (in a non-profit organization preferred, but not necessarily a membership association)
- Working with elected & appointed government officials at all levels
- Building and sustaining positive relationships and collaborations with key individuals, constituencies and partner organizations
- An understanding of the Washington State political and educational "landscape"
- Developing & maintaining a positive organizational culture
- Financial management and fiscal responsibility; business savvy/perspective
- Public policy advocacy at state and national levels
- Team and coalition building
- Well-networked in a variety of different sectors
- Developing, mentoring, empowering, motivating, engaging and evaluating staff in a team environment
- Providing high quality customer service and promotion of it through marketing, media and public relations
- Understanding current best practices in organizational leadership
- Understanding WSSDA and its programs is a plus
- Conflict management and resolution
- Development & implementation of multi-year strategic plans/initiatives
- Diversification of revenues through entrepreneurial initiatives and growth of their organization(s)
- Leadership in the public education field (a plus)





The successful candidate will possess the following personal attributes and competencies:

- Accountable (holds self and others accountable for performance); sets high expectations for self and others; follows through on commitments
- Excellent communications skills – oral, written, listening and public speaking; articulate, direct and concise
- A clear understanding of, and respect for, the role of local school boards, their strengths and weaknesses, and their relationships with superintendents
- Engenders credibility, trust and respect
- Collaborative, inclusive, deferential leadership style; willing to share authority; both a good leader and a good manager, has a bold leadership spirit; leads by example, willing to “roll up their sleeves”
- Energetic, strong work ethic
- High integrity, honest, authentic, genuine, congruent; models the ethics, values and standards of the agency; keeps confidences
- Customer and member-focused
- Decisive decision maker, while remaining open-minded and considerate of other’s views; actively seeks input on key decisions; evaluates potential positive and negative consequences of various options; demonstrates consistency and fairness in decisions
- Out of the box thinker, creative problem solver; resourceful, innovative, entrepreneurial
- Comfortable being visible as the “Face of the Association;” charismatic, dynamic, outgoing
- Visionary, with the ability to inspire others toward their vision
- An advocate for staff and their agency
- Poised/professional public presence, and demeanor; politically and socially astute; tactful, diplomatic, respectful
- Action-oriented, proactive, results-oriented; well-organized; effectively sets and follows mission-driven priorities
- Change agent, courageously challenges “conventional wisdom”

- Exemplary interpersonal skills; personable; engaging; comfortable dealing with wide variety of people, cultures and constituencies
- Good common sense and judgment; intuitive
- Passion for, and commitment to, the organization, the mission, and children
- Positive attitude; inspires optimism, enthusiastic; open, approachable, “transparent,” inviting, friendly; good sense of humor
- Well balanced between a systems-wide (holistic) perspective and attention to detail; between an internal and external focus; and between personal and work life

Application Timing

Interested candidates should submit a letter of interest and resume as soon as possible. Full consideration is assured if letters and resumes are received no later than **Noon PST, March 31, 2010**. We appreciate **all submissions via email to: wssda@hagel.net with documents in MS Word format.** If alternative methods are required please contact us. All submissions will be acknowledged and will be held in strict confidence. However, at such time as applicants are selected as finalists for the position, the finalists’ names will become public information. It is anticipated that final interviews for the position will be conducted in late May, 2010 in Olympia, WA, with the hiring decision being made shortly thereafter.

Contact Information

For further information, please contact: Dave Osmer, Hagel & Company, Phone: 425-643-4223, or email wssda@hagel.net.

WSSDA is an Equal Opportunity Employer and desires a highly diverse candidate group.



APPENDIX

WSSDA Executive Director Responsibilities

The Executive Director is the chief executive officer and is responsible to the Board of Directors for the administration of the Association. The Executive Director's responsibilities include:

Responsibility	Major Tasks
Planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor major educational policy issues. Coordinate and implement the Association's strategic plan.
Financial Management	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Obtain board and staff input in budget development process. Prepare preliminary and final budget. Monitor monthly financial statements. Approve investments. Approve expenditures. Seek additional revenue.
Membership Services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor Association services. Respond to member concerns. Monitor Association committee activity. Attend regional meetings of boards.
Advocacy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor legislative program. Monitor contacts with State Board, OSPI, the Governor's office and other state agencies. Monitor Federal Relations Network (FRN) program.
Association Operations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work with Board of Directors and its Executive Committee. Work with Association legal counsel. Monitor office facility and equipment needs. Maintain Association operating policies.
Staff	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recruit, screen, recommend and/or approve hiring. Responsible for performance of all subordinate staff. Coordinate staff evaluation. Conduct staff meetings and annual retreat. Hear issues of concern to staff. Organize, assign and provide direction to staff.

<p>External Relations</p>	<p>Attend and speak at meetings of other organizations.</p> <p>Coordinate contacts with educational partners such as OSPI, WASA, AWSP, PESB, State Board of Education, WSPTA, Legislature, the Governor’s Office.</p> <p>Work with the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD).</p> <p>Monitor service to Washington Council of School Attorneys.</p> <p>Coordinate contacts with education organizations, service organizations and the media.</p> <p>Work with NSBA.</p>
<p>Leadership</p>	<p>Develop positive office climate.</p> <p>Support staff members in conduct of their work.</p> <p>Anticipate change and advise officers and Board of Directors.</p> <p>Create a positive image for the Association and local school boards.</p> <p>Perform such other duties and responsibilities as delegated by the Board of Directors or as set forth in an administrative policy.</p>