



WAHKIAKUM SCHOOL DISTRICT

October 2025 Superintendent Report

Superintendent's Office

Thank You

I want to sincerely thank you for the opportunity to attend the WSPA Law Conference on October 13-14. It was an extremely beneficial experience, providing timely updates on legal, regulatory, and bargaining issues that directly impact our district and staff.

Conference Overview

The conference offered a comprehensive range of sessions focused on current legal challenges, risk management, and best practices for school districts across Washington. I was able to attend several sessions directly relevant to our ongoing work, including bargaining strategies, mandated staff trainings, and legislative changes affecting schools.

Key Sessions and Takeaways

Bargaining: Strategies, Trends & Challenges

- The bargaining session emphasized that employee compensation comprises about 85% of district budgets, making bargaining outcomes critical to district financial health.
- A key theme was the importance of transparent, data-driven communication with associations about the district's fiscal realities. Presenters advised sharing budget constraints openly, without "shame," and focusing on collaborative problem-solving rather than confrontation.
- It was noted that while compensation remains the central issue at the table, districts are increasingly seeing requests for workload relief, expanded caseload triggers, and staffing guarantees—especially from special education, counselors, and classified staff. However, locking in staffing numbers can reduce future flexibility if economic conditions worsen.
- Strategies for successful bargaining in tight budgets included: explaining the financial "story" early, offering a menu of options rather than ultimatums, avoiding unwise language guarantees (like automatic pass-throughs of state inflationary increases), and exploring creative solutions such as repurposing unused contract funds or considering non-monetary benefits.

Mandated Trainings: Legal Requirements and Local Policy



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- The mandated training session drove home the point that each required training—while sometimes burdensome—addresses real student and staff needs and legal risks. Non-compliance can increase district liability in litigation.
- Trainings fall into two categories: general (for most/all staff, e.g., CPR, bloodborne pathogens, child abuse reporting) and intensive (for staff responsible for students with specific health needs, often provided by school nurses).
- Health and safety topics dominate the mandates, including new requirements for opioid overdose reversal, “Stop the Bleed” trauma intervention, and expanded AED/CPR/first aid. Documentation of all completed training is critical for legal protection.
- Districts are encouraged to supplement state-mandated training with local priorities (like boundaries or conflict resolution) and to keep thorough records. The session also highlighted the need for regularly updated, accessible lists of training requirements.

Legislative Updates Affecting Schools

- The legislative update session covered major statutory changes from the past year, many of which require districts to update their policies and practices:
 - Employment Law: Changes to job posting/pay transparency (employers must now disclose fixed salaries or ranges and have five days to correct errors), driver’s license requirements (may only be included if essential to the job), and expanded employee rights to personnel files and leave for immigration/judicial proceedings.
 - Student Rights and Safety: Passage of a new “Parental Bill of Rights” (with important limits, like preserving student privacy for medical records over age 13), expansion of anti-discrimination protections (including gender identity, homelessness, and neurodivergence), and new requirements for immediate parental notification if a student is a victim of certain crimes.
 - Other Notable Changes: Special education funding reforms, new rules on remote testing, expanded CTE/work hours for minors, and further requirements for educational interpreter certification and cultural expression at graduation.
- The session stressed the importance of updating handbooks, internal policies, and supervisor training to reflect these changes, as well as the need for prompt compliance and clear communication with staff.

Thank you again for supporting my attendance at this conference. The knowledge and connections I gained will help ensure our district remains compliant, proactive, and well-prepared for the evolving legal and regulatory landscape in Washington schools. Please let me know if you would like a more detailed report or discussion on any of the topics above.



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This is an agenda item

Proposal to Adopt Droplet for a One-Year Implementation: Transitioning to a Paperless System for Enhanced Efficiency and Sustainability

Cost Information

The total cost for a one-year full implementation of Droplet is **\$15,000**. This includes platform licensing, support, and initial staff training. Based on our trial, we anticipate that these upfront costs will be offset by savings in staff time, reductions in paper and printing expenses, and improved process efficiency throughout the year.

Executive Summary

This proposal recommends that the Board approve a one-year adoption of **Droplet**, a digital form management platform, to transition our business and HR operations—and ultimately school operations—to a primarily paperless system. This move is expected to significantly improve efficiency, streamline processing, enhance transparency, and support our district's commitment to environmental sustainability.

What is Droplet?

Droplet is a cloud-based digital form management platform designed to automate, streamline, and secure administrative workflows in educational and business environments. Droplet enables organizations to:

- **Create, manage, and store forms online**—accessible from any device, anywhere.
 - **Automate routing and approvals**—eliminating the need for physical document circulation.
 - **Customize workflows**—to fit unique business and HR processes.
 - **Ensure data security and compliance** with robust encryption and audit trails.
 - **Integrate with existing systems**—such as HR, finance, and student information systems.
 - **Generate real-time analytics and reporting**—for transparency and informed decision-making.
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Addressing Current Inefficiencies

1. Manual Routing and Delays

Currently, forms requiring prior authorization (e.g., requisitions, HR requests) must be physically routed to multiple individuals for signatures. This process is:

- **Time-consuming**—leading to delays in approvals.
- **Costly**—as delays can result in increased costs or missed opportunities (e.g., unavailability of goods/services).



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- **Prone to errors and loss**, with forms sometimes misplaced or incomplete.

2. High Volume of Manual Forms

The business office alone manages **over 20 different forms** that are still filled out and signed manually. This manual process:

- Consumes significant staff time.
- Increases the risk of errors and compliance issues.
- Makes tracking and reporting cumbersome.

3. Lack of Structure for Transparency and Reporting

Our current systems lack the built-in structure needed for:

- **Transparent tracking** of form status and approvals.
 - **Efficient reporting** for audits, compliance, and process improvement.
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How Droplet Solves These Challenges

1. Workflow Automation

Droplet automates the entire lifecycle of a form—from creation to approval—by:

- **Routing forms electronically** to the appropriate individuals in sequence or parallel, based on customizable workflows.
- **Sending automated notifications and reminders** to approvers, reducing bottlenecks.
- **Allowing real-time tracking** of form status, so staff always know where a request stands.

2. Centralized, Paperless Management

- **All forms are digitized and stored securely in the cloud**, accessible from any device.
- **No more lost or misplaced paperwork**—every form is searchable and retrievable instantly.
- **Digital signatures** ensure compliance and authenticity without the need for physical presence.

3. Enhanced Transparency and Reporting

- **Built-in analytics and reporting tools** provide instant visibility into processing times, approval bottlenecks, and compliance metrics.
- **Audit trails** document every action taken on a form, supporting transparency and accountability.

4. Environmental and Cost Benefits

- **Reduces paper, printing, and storage costs**—freeing up resources for other priorities.
 - **Supports sustainability goals** by significantly cutting paper waste and carbon footprint.
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Success of the Trial Period

During our trial implementation, we created and deployed **three crucial forms** using Droplet. These forms have:

- **Streamlined previously cumbersome processes**—with faster turnaround times and fewer errors.
- **Demonstrated the platform's flexibility and ease of use** for both staff and approvers.
- **Provided immediate transparency**—with real-time tracking and digital audit trails.

Feedback from users has been overwhelmingly positive, with staff noting the reduction in manual effort and the clarity of the new digital workflows.

Alignment with Best Practices and Industry Trends

- **Educational institutions nationwide are moving to paperless systems** to improve efficiency, reduce costs, and enhance compliance.
 - **Best practices recommend piloting digital systems, providing training, and scaling up based on success**—all of which we have done during our trial.
 - **Digital form management systems like Droplet offer proven ROI** through time savings, cost reduction, and improved service delivery.
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Next Steps and Recommendations

- **Board Approval:** Authorize a one-year full implementation of Droplet for business, HR, and school operations.
 - **Expand Digitization:** Prioritize digitizing the remaining 20+ manual forms and any additional forms identified by departments.
 - **Training and Support:** Continue staff training and provide ongoing support to ensure smooth adoption.
 - **Monitor and Report:** Track key metrics (processing times, cost savings, user satisfaction) and report progress to the Board quarterly.
 - **Evaluate for Long-Term Adoption:** At the end of the year, assess outcomes and determine whether to continue or expand Droplet's use.
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Conclusion

Adopting Droplet for one year is a strategic investment in our district's efficiency, transparency, and sustainability. The success of our trial, combined with industry best practices and the clear benefits of digital transformation, strongly supports moving forward. We recommend that the Board approve this proposal to help our district become a model of modern, efficient, and environmentally responsible school operations.



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Levy Replacement Planning Update – Board Report

Red= Completed

Blue = In progress

As we prepare for the upcoming replacement levy on the February Wahkiakum elections ballot, our team has laid out a comprehensive timeline to ensure strong community engagement and transparent communication.

Key Actions & Timeline:

- **September: Organized the Levy Committee to lead planning and outreach efforts.**
 - Ron Wright
 - Ric Palmer
 - Rob Garrett
- **October 21: School Board to pass the official resolution in support of the levy.**
- Mid-November: Distribute the first “levy blurb” to school secretaries for inclusion in the December newsletter.
- Nov 15–26: Launch a community survey via SurveyMonkey to gather feedback and address remaining questions about the levy.
- By December 15: Submit all required documentation to the County Elections Department, including the board resolution, For/Against Committee appointments, and the Explanatory Statement.
- Mid-December: Prepare and send the January newsletter levy update.
- January:
 - Jan 4 & 5: Maintenance team to hang banners and signs.
 - Jan 6 & 13: Levy Committee to continue signage efforts.
 - Mid-January: Prepare February newsletter levy content.
- February: Levy information included in school newsletters as final reminders.
- February 11: Levy Election Day!

We are on track with our timeline and will continue to provide updates and solicit community input as we move forward. Thank you for your ongoing support and involvement in this critical process.

Legal

Wahkiakum School District has had a lease agreement with EarthScope Consortium (formerly UNAVCO) for the continued operation of a GPS monitoring station located behind the school district offices in Cathlamet, WA. The GPS station is part of a scientific network that measures ground shifts caused by earthquakes and slow fault slip. After a review, it was determined that the lease expired in 2020 and no new lease was executed. The lease, originally set to expire in 2030, is being renewed at EarthScope’s request and allows for two additional five-year renewal terms if the District agrees.

Key points include:



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- Lease Term: 10 years, with two optional 5-year renewals.
- Termination: The District can terminate the lease at any time with 30 days' written notice; EarthScope will then have 60-90 days to remove equipment.
- Maintenance: EarthScope is responsible for maintaining equipment and premises safely, notifying the District before visits or additions.
- Liability: Each party indemnifies the other from claims relating to their respective actions.
- No Cost: There is no mention of compensation or costs to the District.
- Confidentiality: The agreement is to be kept confidential.



Superintendent's Travel Calendar-

Date: July 21-22

Location: Olympia WA

Reason for travel: New and Incoming Superintendents Conference

Funding Source:

Date: July 29th

Location: ESD 112, Columbia Boardroom, 2500 NE 65th Avenue, Vancouver, WA

Reason for travel: New Superintendent Orientation. The orientation will be a time to meet our leadership team and briefly learn about ESD 112 services. Tim also hopes you will share your goals for the upcoming year and any assistance you need.

Funding Source:



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Date: September 26th

Location: Vancouver, WA ESD 112

Reason for travel: Superintendent's Regional Business Meeting

Funding Source: Superintendent Travel

Date: October 2nd

Location: Oakville WA

Reason for travel: Superintendent's Small District Gathering

Funding Source: Superintendent Travel

Date: Oct 13, 2025 8:00 AM - Oct 14, 2025 3:00 PM

Location: DoubleTree Suites By Hilton At Southcenter

16500 Southcenter Parkway

Seattle, 98188-3388

Reason: WSPA School Law Conference |

Funding Source:

Date: February 12th-14th

Location: Nashville TN

Reason for travel: Superintendent's National Conference

Funding Source:

Departmental Reports

Business Office

Resolution for Outstanding Warrants (Unclaimed Property): RCW 39.56.040 requires a board resolution for the cancellation of warrants not presented for payment within one (1) year of the date of issue.

Square Update: We are getting close! Paul Ireland is working with the secretaries to collect a list of items and prices to be input into the Square Terminals and a website payment link.

DOR Statement on ESSB 5814 (Taxpayer Responsibility):

For reference, the Department of Revenue shared the following written statement to retain as guidance on taxpayer responsibility:

ESSB 5814 requires businesses to collect retail sales tax on the following services beginning October 1, 2025:



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- *Advertising services.*
- *Live presentations.*
- *Information technology services.*
- *Custom website development services.*
- *Investigation, security, and armored car services.*
- *Temporary staffing services.*
- *Sales of custom software and customization of prewritten software.*

ESSB 5814 also removes the following exclusions from the definition of digital automated services (DAS):

- *Services involving primarily human effort.*
- *Live presentations.*
- *Advertising services.*
- *Data processing services.*

It is the seller's responsibility to collect the sales tax on these services, but if they do not, then the buyer is not required to report use tax until the department publishes further guidance. With that said, keep in mind that this only applies to the services newly subject to sales tax. Therefore, if the school is not charged sales tax on retail sales not included in ESSB 5814, they are responsible for reporting use tax. Also, we anticipate the use tax reporting obligation will be added to the services included in ESSB 5814 in an upcoming legislative session, so it could be good practice to report use tax.

Thanks, Janet.

TPS Education & Outreach Team
Taxpayer Services Division
6500 Linderson Way SW
Tumwater, WA 98501
TPSEducationOutreach@dor.wa.gov
[Washington State Department of Revenue](#)

Expenditures:

- General Fund: \$128,314.48
- HS ASB: \$1,960.55
- MS ASB: \$690.00
- ASB Comp Tax: \$20.28
- Payroll: \$450,450.54



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Fund Balances:

- General Fund: \$1,553,768.36
- ASB: \$199,052.19
- Capital Projects: \$96,551.30
- Transportation: \$189,925.22

Human Resources

Staffing Count: 55

- Administrative - 3
- Certificated - 25
- District - 4
- Classified - 23

Open Positions:

- MS Head BBB Coach
- MS Asst BBB Coach
- HS BBB C Squad - not posted as yet
- HS Head Golf Coach - not posted as yet
- HS Asst Softball Coach - not posted yet

Facilities/Maintenance

Wahkiakum School District

Maintenance, Grounds, and Custodial Monthly Report

1. Work Order Summary

During this reporting period, **62 maintenance tickets** were submitted.

- **42 tickets** have been resolved.
 - **7 tickets** are currently pending due to vendor-related delays.
 - The remaining tickets are in various stages: some are awaiting approval for parts orders, while others are in the early diagnostic phase as I assess the best course of action for resolution.
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2. Completed Repairs and Improvements



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- **AG Shop Boiler:** The boiler is back online and operating normally after repairs, restoring full heating functionality.
 - **Box and Portable Classrooms:** Heating systems are operational, resolving several occupant comfort concerns as cooler weather sets in.
 - **Maintenance Office Remodel:** The shop office underwent a light remodel, improving workspace functionality and organization.
 - **Custodial Staffing:** Jillian, a new custodian, is set to begin on **October 21st**, offering much-needed relief to our currently overextended custodial staff.
 - **Well Irrigation Project:** I'm in contact with McGee drilling to conduct a feasibility study in regards to placing a well on the eastern side of campus to aid in the irrigation of the football field. A dedicated, detailed report will be submitted on the project.
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3. Fritz Building Renovation Planning

- All **contractor bids** for the Fritz Building remodel are in. All three quotes range from **\$94,000 to \$100,000**, falling within a 6% variance.
 - **PUD Incentive:** PUD has offered **\$9/sq ft** in financial assistance for window replacements in the Fritz Building.
 - A more detailed and focused report on the Fritz remodel, including side-by-side quote comparisons and recommendations, will follow shortly.
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4. Upcoming Meeting – Apollo Solutions

A meeting is scheduled with **Apollo Solutions** on **October 17 at 0900** to discuss our grant related to facility efficiency and infrastructure upgrades.

5. Preventive Maintenance & Equipment Servicing

Preventative maintenance continues on schedule:



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- **Quarterly HVAC filter replacements** are in progress.
- **Electrical Breaker boxes** were inspected campus-wide.
- **Roof and gutter cleanings** have started to prevent drainage issues as the rainy season approaches.
- **Grounds equipment**, including mowers, is being serviced—specifically, the **Kubota mower**, which requires a new **water pump** and **linkage repairs**.
- **Assets are being logged** into **Incident IQ**, with preventative maintenance schedules being built out accordingly to improve long-term tracking and equipment health.

6. Custodial Supplies

A **Walter Neilson** order will be required this month to restock custodial supplies. Inventory is being reviewed to consolidate the order efficiently.

7. Ongoing Challenges

- **Custodial Staffing:** Shortages continue to put pressure on existing staff. Jillian's onboarding is expected to provide some relief.
- **Vendor Delays:** Several repairs remain open pending vendor support or specialized parts.
- **Equipment Repairs:** As mentioned, the **small Kubota mower** is down and awaiting parts.

Summary

This reporting period reflects continued forward progress in maintenance and facility improvements, including restoration of key systems, strategic planning for capital projects, and proactive asset management. While staffing and equipment repairs remain ongoing challenges, the department is working to mitigate their impact and sustain operational efficiency.

Please let me know if additional detail is needed on any of the items above.



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Transportation

Board Report: Purchase of New Route Bus

Athletics

Mules Volleyball has 4 home games starting on Thursday, October 22nd

Special Education

No Report at this time

Food Service

No Report at this time

Technology

Fortimail: A Fortinet solution focusing on email security. Purchased with funds from the SLGCP grant. This is our last notable gap in security infrastructure. Once this solution is installed and configured, we will gain the following benefits:

- Finer control over quarantines - fewer false positives that need to be manually passed through the system
- Inline scanning of attachments
- Safeguards against the release of personally identifiable information
- Enhanced protection against more sophisticated email threats (Phishing, account takeover)
- Real-time visibility into emerging attacks and earlier detection
- Integration with the free (for schools) Fortinet Cybersecurity Awareness lessons

The first of the setup days was on October 7, the next two and the project close will be on October 21 and 22

The Intune/Entra migration of users and workstations concluded early this month. So far, it's yielded a notable drop in issues related to staff/teacher computers and saved significant time on software installation and device/user management. I've started planning the migration of support services (ex, print server) to this platform as well.

Server refresh: Currently, our server hardware (two hypervisors, a storage array, and a backup server) has been out of support for approximately a year. The operating systems (Microsoft Server 2019) are end-of-life and in extended support. These servers run the bulk of our security and support platforms.



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It seems sensible to me at this point to pursue replacement hardware with active support, running a modern operating system. With the migration to Intune, our backup solution needs to be revised, and I'm not satisfied with the reliability and management overhead of the backup software. I'd like the project kickoff no later than early Summer. Winter or Spring break would be preferable if financially possible.

With this in mind, I have been looking at options that meet the following criteria:

- A replacement hypervisor array capable of running our current workload, with an anticipated 10% growth. Same-day support for 5 years.
- A slightly downsized storage array. With the migration to Intune/Entra, we no longer need a giant network storage for user data; it's all in the cloud. Same-day support for 5 years
- A cloud-native backup solution with a minimum of 7TB storage (weekly full backup and daily snapshot) for the user data that now resides in Intune/Entra, as well as a local component for emergency restorations of mission-critical security/support data. Minimum 3-year subscription.
- "White Glove" service. Meaning a support team installs the hardware and migrates/upgrades the workloads.

Site Reports

Legislative update

Over the past year, Washington State has continued to advance significant reforms in both student discipline and youth employment law—developments that carry direct implications for our district's operations and our students' well-being.

Discipline Legislation: The state's approach to student discipline has shifted decisively toward equity and educational access. Recent legislative changes and OSPI guidance now require that exclusionary discipline, such as suspensions and expulsions, be reserved for only the most serious offenses. Discretionary discipline can no longer result in long-term removal from school. Instead, districts are expected to prioritize restorative practices and alternatives that keep students engaged in their education. When exclusionary discipline is necessary, we are mandated to provide educational services during the period of removal and to develop individualized reengagement plans for students returning to school. These changes are designed to address disproportionality in discipline and to ensure that all students, regardless of background, have equitable access to learning opportunities.

For our district, this means ongoing review and revision of our discipline policies and procedures, as well as regular analysis of discipline data to identify and address any disparities. Staff training in restorative practices and culturally responsive approaches is increasingly important. Our collective bargaining agreement reinforces



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the principle of due process for staff, ensuring that disciplinary actions are taken with just cause and that progressive discipline is the standard, aligning with state law and best practices.

Reforming Work Restrictions for 16-17 Year Olds: Parallel to discipline reform, the legislature has considered updates to youth employment laws, particularly for 16- and 17-year-olds. The proposed reforms would expand the permissible work hours for older minors, especially during the school year, and streamline the permitting process. The intent is to provide students with greater opportunities for work-based learning and employment, while still safeguarding their educational progress.

For school boards, these changes require careful coordination. As students take on more work hours, we must ensure that their employment does not interfere with school attendance or academic achievement. Our policies may need to be updated to reflect new state requirements, and we should be prepared to offer guidance to students and families about balancing work and school. Monitoring attendance and academic performance for working students will be essential, as will collaboration with local employers to support positive outcomes for our students.

Both the discipline and youth employment reforms reflect a broader commitment to equity, opportunity, and student success. As a board, our role is to ensure that district policies are not only compliant with state law but also responsive to the needs of our students and staff. This includes supporting professional development, engaging with families and community partners, and maintaining a focus on data-driven decision-making. By doing so, we can help create a school environment where every student has the support and opportunity to thrive.

End of Report