



212 W. 3rd St. PO BOX 38 Wapato, WA 98951 509-877-4181

Kelly Garza, Superintendent

November 3, 2024

Contacts: Mike Balmelli, Community Relations Manager 509-307-4923/509-877-5019

Wapato School Board Recognized as “Board of Distinction”

CONGRATULATIONS to the Wapato School Board of Directors for earning the State “Board of Distinction” recognition from the Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) as a medium sized district. Wapato School Board members include President, John Francisco, Vice President, Sarah Divina, Javier Vela, Lori Garcia and Lorenzo Alvarado.

The annual WSSDA Boards of Distinction program honors school boards that demonstrate effective use of the Washington School Board Standards. The standards promote research-based governance practices that lead to high levels of student and district achievement, and help close the opportunity gap.

The Wapato Board’s application focused on the importance of providing a high-quality learning environment for all students as a way to help close the opportunity gap. It referenced expansion of the District’s Dual Language program, bilingual learning opportunities, learnings from the Superintendent’s Student Voice Matters group and an increase in student achievement and cultural understanding.

WSSDA Director of Leadership Development, Heather Curl, says “The Board's focus on equity and the desire to address opportunity gaps through “intentional, sustained action” seemed to provide the clear vision for success...”

All of the Board of Distinction honorees will be recognized during the Annual State WSSDA Conference taking place November 20-22 in Seattle.

The Wapato Board’s selection as a Board of Distinction also puts it in the running to be chosen as one of the Boards of the Year. Each year WSSDA recognizes one board from each of its three categories of small, medium & large school districts as a Board of the Year. The Boards of the Year will be revealed during the State Conference.