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## President's Column



It has been just eight months since I wrote to kick off WERA's 55<sup>th</sup> year. They have been long months, though, as we weathered storms of political and civil unrest, brutal inequities and racism, and a devastating pandemic that closed schools and businesses and took loved ones away from us. Still, we got up and went to work, because the work was our way to make things better.

As for your WERA Board, we went back to our roots to regroup, set new goals, and set out to be more agile and responsive for our members. Then, like you, we got to work. We began August by convening the DAC Network and Data Viz special interest groups, to prepare for reopening of schools and remote learning.

Through the fall, we presented several Hot Topic webinars, including a series addressing the challenges of assessment during this pandemic. In winter, we held our first ever WERA Virtual Summit. With a theme of *Reimagining Education toward Equity*, we had three afternoons of keynote speakers, engaging sessions, with time at the end of each day to debrief. We are so grateful for our partnership with OSPI and UW's Leadership for Learning program to make the Virtual Summit a success.

Moving from winter into spring, we held our second annual Racial Equity Book Study with Jennifer Eberhardt's book, *Biased*. Hot Topic sessions continued with a discussion of *College and Career Readiness in the COVID Era* and now we look forward to an equity-focused discussion of assessment growth data in May.

Behind the scenes, we said goodbye to Dr. Melanie Quaempts as our Executive Secretary. Melanie was integral in reorganizing the business side of WERA, digitizing records and providing assurances and wisdom through tumultuous times. Then we welcomed Deirdre Griswold as WERA's new Executive Secretary. Deirdre dug right in, learning about our procedures, member database and bookkeeping – and all while transitioning our professional learning experiences to Zoom.

I want wrap this up by expressing my deep gratitude to our Past President, Dr. Hilary Loeb. I've learned much from Hilary and am very grateful for her leadership, mentoring and friendship.

In these times, change has been our constant, while flexibility, creativity and grace have been the essential elements propelling us forward. I thank you for support of WERA and look forward to our future together.

**Brian Rick**

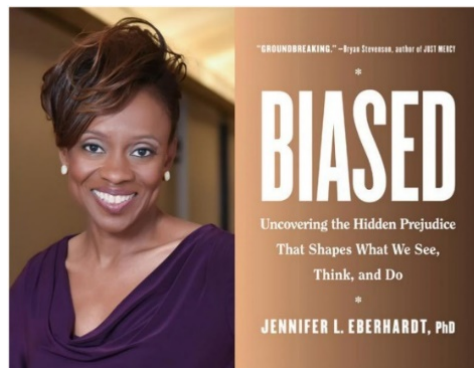
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## WERA Book Study Highlights

WERA's second annual Racial Equity book study was a rich conversation among researchers, teachers, coaches, principals and OSPI staff about the book *Biased: Uncovering the Hidden Prejudice That Shapes What We See, Think, and Do* by Jennifer Eberhardt. Eberhardt, a MacArthur Fellow and professor at Stanford University synthesized her research and recent efforts to respond to racism. Hilary Loeb, LaWonda Smith Marshall and Molly Branson Thayer co-facilitated the book study in which participants discussed how to recognize and disrupt bias in classrooms and educational systems.

We welcome WERA members and non-members to suggest titles for upcoming book study and hope to announce meeting dates in fall 2021.



**Hilary Loeb**  
**WERA Past President**

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## WERA Awards

### **Congratulations to this year's WERA award winners!**

The WERA Award Winners were announced at our Member Happy Hour on April 15th. Below are winners, summaries of their work as well as links to learn more. To learn more about the WERA Awards, [visit our website](#).

#### **WERA Distinguished Paper Award**

##### **Award Winners: Soojin Oh Park and Nail Hassairi**

Paper Title: What predicts legislative success of early care and education policies?: Applications of machine learning and Natural Language Processing in a cross-state early childhood policy analysis (2021)

Summary: We all know that early childhood educational programs are the best investment this country can make in education. There is a large body of research supporting this claim; however, what good are quality early learning programs if the legislature will not fund them? These two researchers address this important question and demonstrate how we may be able to use big data to predict which early childhood state legislation will be most likely to pass into law. Read the entire paper [here](#).

#### **WERA Product Award**

##### **Award Winners: Cultivate Learning, at University of Washington College of Education**

Product: Implementation Development Map (IDM)

Summary: The Implementation Development Map (IDM) is a process-oriented tool designed to help state leaders implement high-quality equitable prekindergarten (pre-k) systems and practices that produce equitable early learning opportunities for every child. The IDM can be used to describe, assess, prioritize, plan, and measure implementation of state pre-k policies and infrastructure along seven Elements essential to equitable high-quality pre-k: professional development, research-based curriculum, formative child assessment, high-quality teaching, data-driven decision-making, instructional leadership, and political leadership. Learn more [here](#).

#### **WERA Research Award**

##### **Award Winner: Dr. Randi Freeman**

Research Project: *Using the Danielson Framework to evaluate the teachers of English language learners in Washington State: A mixed methods study.*

Summary: By using questionnaires, textual analysis and live interviews with administrators, Dr. Freeman's research highlights the shortcomings of using the Danielson Framework for Teaching to accurately assess the quality of ELL Teachers.

#### **Gordon B. Ensign Award**

##### **Award Winner: Greg Lobdell**

In 2000 Greg co-founded the Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) which works with countless districts in WA (including mine) and focuses on improving student outcomes through organizational effectiveness and improving the professional culture of schools and districts. Greg served many roles at CEE where he is currently the Chief Research Officer. However, starting this year, he will begin to enjoy his retirement. Congratulations on reaching this next amazing chapter of life, Greg!

#### **Art Maser Service Award**

##### **Award Winner: Paul Stern**

Paul has been an active member of WERA for 21 years. In that time, he has served four years on the WERA board as a member at large and a cycle as president. He launched and currently manages the WERA-Connect listserv, served on conference planning committees, and presented at many conferences. Paul has worked as a "Data Strategist" on the research, evaluation, and assessment team for eleven years in Vancouver, Washington. Among other tasks, he enjoys developing predictive models to facilitate the design of strategic interventions.

**Brandon Lagerquist, WERA Board Member**

**Molly Branson Thayer, WERA President-Elect**

## Virtual Summit Recap

In December and January WERA hosted our first Virtual Summit. We are incredibly grateful to the dozens of people who led sessions and helped with the organization and to all of our members for joining us. Over the course of three days, we offered 20 hour-long sessions on a range of timely topics and hosted two incredible keynote speakers: Author Dr. Ann Ishimaru and Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal.

You can see the [full program here](#) and WERA members can access recordings of every session [here](#). We encourage you to take advantage of these incredible presentations led by experts from across the state. If you aren't yet a WERA member, you can join anytime and have instant access to our entire library of professional development offerings, including the Virtual Summit. [Click here to join.](#)



Virtual Summit keynote speakers, left to right: Dr. Gene Sharratt, Dr. Andrea Cobb, Superintendent Chris Reykdal, and Dr. Ann Ishimaru

Here are highlights of just a few of the Virtual Summit sessions:

### **Keynote Address by Superintendent of Public Instruction, Chris Reykdal**

The Superintendent speaks about standardized federal accountability assessments for this school year, as well as his commitment to educating the whole child before addressing any learning that may have occurred during the pandemic.

### **Finding our Roots: Understanding Inequity in Our System and Finding the Keys to Dismantling it, and Moving Forward**

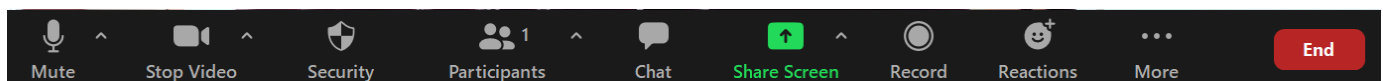
Presented by Andrea Cobb, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

A robust discussion about the history of policy and education through the lens of equity.

### **Inclusionary Leadership: A Path to Liberation**

Presented by Chris Espeland and Kurt Hatch, Association of Washington State Principals

This interactive session provides a thought-provoking accessible history of student assessment, making the case for inclusionary practices in classrooms and schools.



*The Standard Deviation*, published spring, fall, and winter as an online newsletter. Submissions are welcomed from WERA members and others. Kindly submit articles for consideration using APA format to Julie DeBolt at [jdebolt@auburn.wednet.edu](mailto:jdebolt@auburn.wednet.edu). Previous issues and submission guidelines are online at <http://www.wera-web.org>.

## Upcoming Events

WERA members, be sure to join us for these exciting events:

### **Equity in Education: Using Growth Data to Improve Student Outcomes**

May 4, at 3:30 pm

Are all methods of school performance measurement created equal? Does measuring achievement alone serve students or schools with differing levels of challenges? Join this webinar led by Dr. John Cronin, senior research fellow at NWEA®, as he shares the results and implications of groundbreaking NWEA research on how schools serving children experiencing poverty are and are not able to impact school-level achievement and growth.

### **WERA Book Talk with author Professor Michael Knapp discussing his new book *Dropping Pebbles in the Pond: A Collection of Memories and Meanings***

June 3, at 3:30 – registration forthcoming

This collection of personal reflections explores events, episodes, and feelings in Professor Knapp's past. Each one is prompted by an artifact, something that tumbled out of a long unopened box. These prompts call up memories that crisscross his years, from age 7 to 74. The reflections probe what the stories say and mean to him looking back across a long lifetime

### **WERA Student Growth Webinar, hosted by Dr. Fengyi Hung**

August 2021

This webinar will focus on sharing 2020-21 student growth data from various school districts around the state. The intent is to provide insights into how educational inequities manifest, if any, and how they might be addressed for K-12 educators and district assessment teams. We will discuss the district assessment implications in system thinking, data reporting, score interpretations, and 2021-22 assessment planning. The session partners with three district assessment vendors: Curriculum Associates (i-Ready), NWEA (MAP), and Renaissance Learning (STAR).

... and don't forget to catch up on the recordings of events you may have missed here.

## Call for Papers for the WERA Educational Journal (WEJ)

We are seeking submissions for the Autumn 2021 issue of the *WERA Educational Journal*. The *WEJ* is a collection of academic papers, professional reports, book reviews, and other articles and summaries of general significance and interest to the Northwest education research and practitioner community.

Topics in the *WEJ* cover a wide range of areas of educational research and related disciplines. These include but are not limited to issues related to the topics listed below.

- Early childhood education
- Curriculum and instruction
- State and national standards
- Professional development
- Student special populations
- Early warning indicators
- Social and emotional issues
- School and district effectiveness
- Teacher and principal evaluation
- Education finance and policy
- Educational technology
- Educational leadership

We encourage the submission of condensed versions of dissertations and theses that are reader friendly. For information about the *WEJ* and its submissions, see the Submission Guidelines posted on the WERA website. If you have questions about the process or about possible submissions, email [WEJeditor@gmail.com](mailto:WEJeditor@gmail.com).

**Antony Smith, Ph.D.**

**Editor, WERA Educational Journal**

## Resource Spotlight: Center for Assessment



The *National Center for the Improvement of Educational Assessment*, aka the [Center for Assessment](#), is a not-for-profit organization founded to address the current changes and future challenges in educational assessment and accountability. The Center supports education leaders as they work to “improve their systems and to deal with the challenges that invariably arise when they are maintaining or transitioning existing systems.”

**WERA's Virtual Summit** – In case you missed it, check out these two excellent sessions from the Center for Assessment team. On December 10th, Juan D'Brot presented *Assessment and Accountability Considerations for Spring 2021 and Beyond: More than High Stakes Data*. On December 15th, Executive Director Scott Marion and Jeri Thompson presented *A Framework for Culturally Responsive and Sustainable Assessment*.

**Classroom Assessment Learning Modules** – The Center for Assessment created a [series of learning modules](#) to support the development of educators' classroom assessment literacy in areas critical to student academic success and reducing achievement gaps. All learning modules have pre-recorded video presentations, downloadable slide decks, and supplementary tools and handouts. Practice exercises are used throughout the learning modules to help educators apply the knowledge and skills in their context.

**Centerline** – Bookmark [this page](#) for blog posts from the Center team and guest authors, who share a diversity of viewpoints intended to support schools, districts and states navigating assessment and accountability in pursuit of improved student learning. Start with this post from Carla Evans, “*Classroom Assessment Literacy is Needed Now More Than Ever: Leveraging a Formative Assessment Approach to Inform Student Learning Progress and Teaching Practices in a Post-Pandemic Education Environment*.”

**Brian Rick**  
President

## Thank You WERA 2020-2021 Platinum Sponsors

WERA's sponsors help support fees for well-known keynote speakers at our conferences, fund WERA research grants, and support costs of technology necessary for WERA to stay current in today's world. We are deeply grateful for this investment. More information about WERA sponsorship may be found [here](#).



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## Election of Officers for 2021-22

Congratulations to our new WERA Board Members At-Large and our President-Elect. Their statements about WERA service are below.

**Almai Malit** - elected to a three-year term as a Board member at-large  
Executive Director of Equity, Assessment & Accountability, Highly Capable Programs  
Puyallup School District

*Excerpt from Almai's Candidate Statement:* It will be an honor to serve as a board member of the Washington Educational Research Association (WERA). While I enjoy and belong to a number of professional organizations, WERA is what I consider "home" when it comes to the quality of professional development, organizational service, and cross-discipline/cross-industry network that it draws. More importantly, I am looking forward to being a part of a professional learning community that allows me to continue to grow myself personally and professionally while contributing to the many services WERA offers to its members.



**Andrea Cobb** - elected to a three-year term as a Board member at-large  
Senior Program Officer, K-12 Education, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

*Excerpt from Andrea's Candidate Statement:* My connection to WERA and service on the board began in 2017 when I served as the OSPI liaison to WERA and co-chair of the WERA/OSPI annual conference from 2017-2019. While serving on the board I had the opportunity to build connections with colleagues across the state who all share a passion for using data and research to achieve more equitable outcomes for students across our state, and I would appreciate the opportunity to continue to serve in the role of member at-large.

**Brandon Lagerquist** - elected to the President Elect role (will be President in '22 - '23)  
Director - Assessment, Research, and Evaluation, Edmonds School District

*Excerpt from Brandon's Candidate Statement:* It's been a great honor to serve on the WERA board for the past three years and to collaborate with many members since I first joined WERA in 2006. In addition to serving WERA members on the board, I have been a member of the annual conference planning committee on 5 separate occasions and also supported the planning and participated as a presenter at the virtual learning series that WERA has implemented during this current school year. WERA has been one of the most important professional communities for me. Membership has not only vastly improved my effectiveness as a school district leader but has also led to many enduring friendships with other WERA members.

## Stay Connected

Staying connected with colleagues is critical in these times when turbulent changes in public health and policies require bring rapid challenges and innovations. Washington Educational Research Association's members-only **WERA-Connect listserv** easily facilitates two-way communication between you and your WERA colleagues across the state.

WERA-Connect listserv provides email-based collaboration between WERA members like a virtual community of practice. Are you wondering what diagnostic tools others are considering for their 2021 Reopening Plan? Are you stuck with a data analytics challenge and know that someone else must have dealt with the same challenge? Use WERA-Connect to both ask and answer questions with your peers. To join, just send an email to [wera-connect-join@list.wera-web.org](mailto:wera-connect-join@list.wera-web.org).

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