



**National Association of
School Superintendents**
United in Common Purpose: Each Other's Success

Name

Dr. Adam Swinyard

Current School District and Location

Spokane Public Schools, Spokane, WA

INTRODUCTION

Dr. Adam Swinyard has served as superintendent of Spokane Public Schools since 2020. During his tenure, the district has achieved record-setting graduation rates, with more than 90% of seniors graduating on time in multiple years. His leadership has earned statewide and national recognition, including being named Washington State Superintendent of the Year (2022) by the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) and a "Superintendent to Watch" by the National School Public Relations Association (NSPRA).

Education

Dr. Swinyard earned his B.A. in secondary education from Northwest University. He earned his M.Ed., Ed.D in executive leadership, and Washington State Principal and Superintendent credentials from Seattle Pacific University.

Experience

Dr. Swinyard was appointed superintendent of Spokane Public Schools by the Board of Directors in 2020.

He previously served as principal of Sacajawea Middle School in Spokane from 2013 to 2016, where he was twice nominated for the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) Washington State Middle School Principal of the Year Award and was named an AWSP Regional Principal of the Year in 2015.

Earlier in his career, he held administrative roles as assistant principal at Cheney High School in Cheney, Washington, and as principal assistant at Garry Middle School in Spokane.

Dr. Swinyard began his career in education as a teacher, with experience in health and fitness, language arts, and social studies. He taught in western Washington school districts, including Glacier Peak High School in the Snohomish School District and McAuliffe Elementary School in Redmond.

Outstanding Achievement(s)

Under his leadership, Spokane Public Schools was named a "District of Distinction" in 2024 by District Administration Leadership Institute for its equity work. In 2025, the Spokane Journal of Business named Dr. Swinyard one of 25 "People of Influence."

Dr. Swinyard led the successful "Together Spokane" initiative, a joint school bond and Spokane Parks and Recreation levy that will transform Spokane for generations. He also inspired the district's Engage IRL initiative, which encourages students to reduce cell phone use and increase involvement in

extracurricular activities. The Engage IRL initiative saw 65% of SPS students involved in extracurricular activities in the 2024-25 school year, a significant increase over previous years.

AN INTERVIEW

Tell us about how you see today's superintendent.

Today's superintendent plays a critical role in fostering an environment where relationships are truly at the center of the work. Student success does not happen in isolation—it grows out of strong, trusting connections among educators, students, and families. The superintendent helps set the tone for a culture where people feel seen, heard, and valued, and where collaboration and mutual respect are expected. This means being visible, approachable, and intentional about creating opportunities for meaningful engagement. By prioritizing these relationships, the superintendent helps build a foundation where students can thrive academically and socially, and where families feel supported and empowered as essential partners in their children's education.

What new understandings did you acquire after two or three years on the job?

After a few years in the role, one of the most important understandings is how essential it is to actively seek out partners both within and beyond the district. The challenges facing education today are complex and constantly evolving, and no single leader or organization can address them alone. I've come to appreciate the value of tapping into the collective wisdom, expertise, and connections of others—whether that's teachers and staff within the system, community organizations, higher education partners, or regional and national networks. These partnerships not only expand capacity but also bring fresh perspectives that can lead to more innovative and effective solutions. Over time, it becomes clear that progress is accelerated when we approach the work as a shared responsibility.

Share an idea to use or something you've learned with your colleagues.

One idea I would share is the importance of being intentional and consistent about listening. It's easy to become focused on initiatives and outcomes, but taking the time to truly hear from staff, students, and families is what leads to better decisions and stronger alignment. Creating regular, structured opportunities for input—along with informal chances for conversation—helps ensure that a range of perspectives is considered. Just as important is closing the loop by communicating how that input informs decisions. When people know their voices and see their feedback reflected in action, it builds trust, strengthens relationships, and fosters a shared sense of purpose across the entire organization.

Submitted by:

Name/Signature

Date