



# News Release

From Seattle Public Schools

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## **Six Seattle Public Schools Recognized by State as Schools of Distinction**

Graham Hill, Leschi, Loyal Heights, Olympic Hills, and West Woodland elementary schools, and Garfield High School, have been named as six of the 86 "Schools of Distinction" by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) for dramatic improvements in student reading and mathematics over the past several years.

On October 10, Superintendent Maria L. Goodloe-Johnson, School Board President Cheryl Chow, and principals and staff at the schools joined the state superintendent of public instruction, Dr. Terry Bergeson to accept the award at a statewide press event in the Seattle area.

OSPI's "Schools of Distinction" represent the top five percent of elementary, middle and high schools whose students have shown outstanding growth in both reading and mathematics skills over a six-year period. This year's winning schools include 51 elementary schools, 20 middle schools and 15 high schools – out of nearly 2,500 schools in the state.

"The Schools of Distinction Award reflects the focused and sustained work at our schools, and I thank Superintendent Bergeson for creating this recognition. It is a real boost to our community," said Seattle Public Schools Superintendent Maria L. Goodloe-Johnson. "I am very proud of all six Seattle schools that received the 2007 Schools of Distinction award, and I want to thank everyone involved in this achievement including teachers, principals, staff, students, families, and community partners."

"I am especially pleased to see that these six schools are located throughout our district, and that they reflect the diverse demographics of our city. For example, at three of the schools, more than 50 percent, and up to 70 percent, of students qualify for free or reduced-price lunch," said Dr. Goodloe-Johnson.

"As I review the factors that each school listed as contributing to their success, I see that they mirror what we know to be research-based best practices across the nation," said Superintendent Goodloe-Johnson. "This fact can give everyone in our community confidence that we can – and will – improve student achievement at every school in our system. The most frequent practices cited include a school-wide focus on student achievement; teacher dedication, collaboration and training; school-wide assessments to guide instruction; family involvement, and partnerships with community organizations."

To be considered for the award, each school had to meet the current year's state learning targets on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning for students in both reading and mathematics.

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Schools that met the reading and mathematics targets were then evaluated for six-year gains on the state's "Learning Improvement Index." Because the award is based on improvement across a six-year period, only results from grades four, seven and 10 were used, as those are the only grade levels with six years of trend data.

School leaders from each of the winning schools were presented with awards and a large banner reading "School of Distinction – 2007 State Superintendent's Learning Improvement Award."

Seattle Schools of Distinction will be recognized and celebrated at the October 17, 2007 School Board meeting. Basic facts, and a narrative that describes success factors for each school, are included below.

### Seattle Public Schools – Schools of Distinction 2007

School Name	Number of Students*	Free or Reduced-Price Lunch Percentage**
Graham Hill Elementary	375	53 percent
Leschi Elementary	236	65 percent
Loyal Heights Elementary	379	9 percent
Olympic Hills Elementary	205	70 percent
West Woodland Elementary	380	10 percent
Garfield High School	1649	23 percent

\*Preliminary count, October 2007; \*\*As of October 2006

Narrative provided by each school to OSPI follows.

#### **Graham Hill Elementary School**

*Principal: Christina Morningstar*

There is no magical answer to the question of why we are successful. It is a combination of efforts:

- Dedicated, professional staff
- Dedicated time for teacher collaboration around student work
- A Student Intervention Team
- A Positive Discipline program
- A Powerful Writers program
- Meaningful assessments of students
- Tutors in the school during the day
- Networking with community groups to allow extended day tutoring and homework help for students
- Budgeting for translations and transportation to school to offer parents more support and parent involvement
- A dynamic parent group
- A Seattle Department of Neighborhoods grant to reach out to our under-represented families and offer them evening computer classes and classes on how to help their children with school and homework
- A counselor
- A Family Support Worker

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## **Leschi Elementary School**

*Principal: Jo Lute-Ervin*

Leschi's improvement on the WASL can be attributed to many things. Among them are system and program changes, teacher dedication and training, school-wide assessments, parent involvement, and use of community resources.

We changed from pull-out programs for bilingual, special education, and Title I to an inclusion model. We started a 90-minute block schedule for reading and 60 minutes for math. We developed a partnership with the University of Washington's Math Department and University Child Development School. The Team Read Program and individual teachers tutor students before and after school in reading. The "Walk to Math" program gives students in grades 3, 4 and 5 mathematics vitamins using WASL language.

Teachers receive intensive training in National Urban Alliance Literacy, Guided Reading, Guided Language Acquisition Design (GLAD), TERC (math), Everyday Math, differentiated instruction, WASL strategies and Curriculum Mapping, all of which support student learning in reading, writing and math. The Kindergarten Reading Assessment, Direct Reading Assessment and the district's math assessments are given each trimester. The results are used to guide instruction. Parent participation in school events and in developing individual learning plans for students is essential.

Finally, we utilize our community resources ... the public libraries, public and private high school tutors, our partnership with the Community Day School Association Preschool, and weekly community volunteers to read to our K-2 students. While we have continued to make gains on the WASL in reading, writing and mathematics, our goal is to continue to do our best to ensure that all students meet or exceed the state's grade-level standards.

## **Loyal Heights Elementary School**

*Principal: Clover Codd*

At Loyal Heights Elementary School, we have had a strong focus on reading and mathematics for the past five years. When building our school vision around success for EVERY child, we looked very carefully at the Nine Characteristics of High Performing Schools. We began with a focus on collaboration within our staff, and structuring time for teachers to plan together. From there we moved to aligning our reading and mathematics programs in our schools.

The alignment of curriculum, instruction and assessment has been fundamental to our success. As we began to look at our data and analyze individuals who were not achieving standards at grade level, we implemented a tutor intervention program for every K-5 student who was in the bottom 25 percent of his/her class. We trained hourly employees in reading and mathematics, and set up a structure for 30-40 minute tutoring sessions two to three times per week (depending upon student need). Our intentions are to "accelerate" learning by providing double doses in reading and mathematics to those in need. Learning Assistance Program dollars are the foundation of our funding for this, but we add PTA dollars to ensure that any child in need receives this service.

At the same time, we focused on raising the level of rigor in all classrooms. All teachers have been trained in Developing Mathematical Ideas, and we are building our knowledge in mathematical content and processes.

We have worked extremely hard to raise the level of academic achievement for EVERY student in our school, and we are honored to receive this award.

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### **Olympic Hills Elementary School**

*Principal: Zoe Jenkins*

Success in reading at Olympic Hills is primarily attributed to two components – implementation of school-wide Guided Reading methodology and materials, and reducing class size to 20-22 students in each room. We use direct teacher modeling and guided student practice in small-group instruction. Book sets and independent reading books are all leveled via the Fountas and Pinnell system. We use Debbie Miller and Stephanie Harvey reading comprehension instruction as the foundation for our small-group teaching.

Success in mathematics at Olympic Hills is primarily attributed to teamwork. Teachers plan units together. At the fourth and fifth grades, students are pre-assessed for each unit and redistributed among the three classrooms for targeted instruction. Groups are flexible and change often.

Olympic Hills serves as a demonstration site for teachers interested in learning about Guided Reading and Lucy Calkins writing. With more than 70 percent of our students qualifying for free/reduced lunch program and 30 percent for bilingual services, we are always excited to gain new ideas. Visitors are welcome.

### **West Woodland Elementary School**

*Principal: Marilyn Loveness*

First, we offer good instruction provided by teachers, aids, parents, volunteers and tutors. That instruction is based on high expectations, knowledge of academic standards, and implementation of strategies that engage and challenge students appropriately.

Second, we have a common focus on improving achievement, particularly in mathematics. That focus involves recognizing where we need to improve, making a common commitment from grades K-5, and working as a team to share responsibility and bring new ideas to our work. Our team includes parents who offer forums on academic programs and experiences with curricula at Family Math Night, the Science Fair, and our Young Authors' Celebration.

Building a strong community around our students has built success in academics. Our on-site day care provides a homework club and tutoring for needy students. Our PTA is committed to all students; has assumed responsibility for bringing valuable experiences in drama, music and art; has respectfully supported staff in their work; and has recruited hundreds of volunteers with a "can do" attitude.

Through community support, state I-728 funding, grants and site-based budgeting we have stretched our budget to keep class size as low as possible. This has enabled teachers to build strong relationships with students, create positive learning communities within each classroom, and differentiate instruction to meet student needs.

Parents, staff and community are all committed to our school vision statement: West Woodland is a caring community working together to create an educational success story for every student.

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**Garfield High School**

*Principal: Ted Howard, Jr.*

At Garfield High School we have been working to establish a culture of collaboration with teaching methodology and practicality. We are also learning to analyze data and use the data as a tool to help shape instruction. During the 2005-06 school year, we formed a mathematics team of five teachers to help our entering freshmen be successful in mathematics at the high school level and to successfully pass the WASL their sophomore year.

Our focus has been on improving our own professional practice and on early intervention and support for struggling students. All team members have a common planning period.

We are committed as a team to use the group structure to actively involve all students in learning mathematics. This requires rewriting most of our lessons, so that they involve a variety of learning styles and require full participation of all group members for completion

We are using the continuation of this work as an effective method of intervention with entry-level students. We have seen a marked difference in student involvement in their own learning during instructional time and have significantly cut our failure rate over last years.

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