



**News release**  
**March 25, 2019**

## **Wellness program leads to *Thriving Schools***

*District wellness program earns recognition from Kaiser Permanente*



*District wellness program coordinator Shelly Henderson accepted Kaiser Permanente's Thriving Schools award at the March 19 board meeting*

Everett—Nutrition, physical activity and mindfulness might sound like things you'd hear at a health clinic or athletic gym, but students and staff in Everett Public Schools are learning and applying these strategies at school.

Funded by district employees, the Everett School Employee Benefit Trust first hired a wellness program coordinator in 2008 to organize and promote educational health and wellness activities for district staff. Shelly Henderson has served as the district wellness program coordinator since 2016. In that time, she has grown the wellness program to include further benefits for the entire district.

In addition to offering courses for staff in healthy eating, physical activity and stress reduction, she has worked with staff specifically on Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction (MBSR). Henderson, who is trained to teach mindfulness, shared, "This approach helps teachers become more effective in managing their own stress levels and assisting their students in the classroom, creating a better learning environment."

Henderson has also worked with high school students in addressing their response to stress with the MBSR model to decrease anxiety around exams and other academic situations. "I use MBSR because it focuses on teaching anxiety and social-emotional coping skills so that students can reach their goals in a healthy and balanced manner, which can decrease the burnout and stress many students face today."

The wellness strategies extend to families during evening school health and wellness events. Henderson offers research-based health and wellness practices for students and family members to use at school and at home.

Henderson's work recently caught the eye of Kaiser Permanente, who awarded Henderson their [Thriving Schools award](#) during the March 19 school board meeting.

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