

News Release

Everett Public Schools
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Superintendent Whitehead to retire, effective Sept. 1

Upon learning of Superintendent Carol Whitehead's decision to retire on Sept. 1, 2008, Everett Public Schools board members expressed sadness about her departure and gratitude for the leadership and vision she brought to Everett when she was hired as superintendent in 2000.

Board members thanked Dr. Whitehead for eight years of selfless dedication to each student in the district and expressed regret that recent events have caused her to seek retirement earlier than anticipated.



Carol Andrews is in her first year as a board member and says, "Dr. Whitehead is one of the most strategic and critical thinkers I have worked with. She has remarkable business insight and is meticulous in her actions. She leaves an indelible mark in the district and a legacy that will drive and ensure that we continue to focus on academic achievement for each student."

Sue Cooper, who has been on the board longer than any other member, lauded Dr. Whitehead for having ... "managed to coordinate, align and articulate systems to improve student learning. Dr. Whitehead has set high expectations and managed available resources effectively to provide staff with the training, technology and tools necessary to continually improve student learning. She has assembled an excellent leadership team focused on student achievement. Carol's passion for the importance of public education has inspired all who work with her."

"Hiring Carol was the best decision I have been involved in during my nine years on the school board," declared **Kristie Dutton**. "We wish we could have her for another nine years. The work of Carol and her team makes Everett Public Schools a premier Washington state district, known for its student accomplishments, especially for learning improvements that occur when an entire system focuses on 'each' child."

Board President **Karen Madsen** notes, "Great leaders have strong ethics and integrity. In 2004, I wrote a nomination for Carol as Superintendent of the Year for the state of Washington. I said then and say again now, 'She is able to do the *right things right* in leading this organization.' We are going to miss her and are so much better off for her having been here. Carol's sensitivity, respect for others, and high expectations of all (herself included), helped instill a renewed sense of pride in the people and the work of Everett Public Schools. Everett has an exceptional staff, well-focused on student achievement; we have an unusually fine fleet of school buildings; we enjoy extraordinary support from our voters; we have a board committed to working as a team; and we have truly superb leaders all across the district."

Whitehead has been the superintendent of Everett Public Schools for the last eight years. However, she has worked for the district for a full 18 years—nearly half of her 40-year career as an educator. Her first Everett position was in 1978 as a reading specialist. In 1982, she became a district elementary principal. In 1984, she accepted the position as an Everett Public Schools curriculum coordinator, and from 1986-88 she was the district's director of curriculum and instruction.

She was away from Everett from 1988 through 2000. During that time, she worked in Federal Way, Tacoma and Bremerton in positions that advanced from elementary principal to assistant superintendent and ultimately Bremerton's superintendent.

Executive Director, **Jim McNally**, remembers that Dr. Whitehead was on the interview team when he was first hired in Everett Public Schools for an elementary principal's position in 1985. He believes, "Carol is an excellent model, holding all of us to the same high standard she demonstrates. Each decision she makes, and every action she takes is done with integrity. I have been honored to work with her."

In making her retirement announcement, Whitehead reviewed with the board and audience members her career in education and the **accomplishments she values most** from the last eight years by stating:

Forty years ago, I began working as a first-grade teacher in Smith Station, Alabama. My path since that time has taken many turns and has resulted in a very exciting career as a public school educator.

On my first day of teaching, I would never have predicted that I would later be offered the position of superintendent in the finest district in the state of Washington, Everett Public Schools.

I am proud to say that eighteen of my forty years in this worthy profession have been in Everett Public Schools where I have worked as a reading specialist, a school principal, the director of curriculum and instruction, and finally as superintendent.

As you know, about a year ago I informed you of my wish to retire in January 2009. **The recent threat on my life** has caused my family to ask me to reconsider that time line. **Therefore, I now plan to retire on Sept. 1, 2008.**

I have been pleased to serve as your superintendent for the past eight years. I believe we, and all the others in this excellent organization, have worked well together to accomplish much for this community and its children. I would like to mention just **a few of those accomplishments.**

- We now have **coordinated, articulated, and aligned curriculum** delivered consistently and effectively across all schools and in all content areas, thus ensuring equitable learning opportunities for all students.
- We have brought to life the verbiage in **the district's strategic plan**; today it is alive in each classroom in every school.
- We have **focused on each student**, become data driven, and given each student and every staff member access to high quality technology.
- We have **improved communication to parents** by putting in place our Instructional Management System and a telephone communication system that sends messages translated in five languages to all parents with one click of a button.
- For several years now, the students in Everett have consistently **scored above the state average** in all grade levels and in every content area on the WASL.
- In addition, between 2000 and 2007, our students have made significant achievement growth as measured by the WASL. For example, **98.6 percent of the students on track to graduate** in the long-awaited class of 2008 met standard on the reading and writing WASL, and 76.3 percent met standard on the mathematics WASL. These scores are a 38.8 percent increase in reading, 66.9 percent increase in writing and 41.3 percent increase in mathematics from the WASL scores for grade 10 students in 2000.
- We have **increased the percent of our students graduating on time** from 55 percent in the spring of 2003 to nearly 80 percent in 2007, and although the state has not yet calculated the percentage for 2008, we expect it to be every bit as good, if not better than 2007.
- Perhaps even more important, we have increased the graduation rate and **decreased the drop-out rate**, not just for all students, but for each racial, program and poverty group reported as part of the No Child Left Behind legislation.
- We have significantly increased the number of students in advanced placement classes or other challenging options, thus exposing them to a much **more rigorous high school experience**.
- Over 60 percent of students in our middle schools are now enrolled in Algebra I or a higher level mathematics course, giving them ample time to take **rigorous mathematics classes** during their four years in high school.
- We have had National Merit **Scholars**, Washington **Scholars**, Gates Millennium **Scholars**, and an increase in the percentage of students enrolling in college after leaving us.
- We have watched **students participate and excel in athletics** and other student body activities.

- We have **clean, attractive, safe facilities**, and we have emergency plans in place for each district site.
- We have **quadrupled the number of graduates from our alternative high school programs**.
- We have remained **fiscally solvent** by implementing efficiencies all across the district.
- We have **partnered** with other k-12 educational agencies, cities, counties, universities, emergency first responders, for-profit and not-for-profit organizations.
- We have **shared what we have learned** at state and national conferences, in meetings with colleagues and through our State of the School Reviews.
- We have passed one, two-year and two, four-year maintenance and operations levies and two capital improvement bonds— all at a high percentage of **"YES" votes**.
- With the approximately \$273 million from the two bonds, we have opened a new school, **remodeled old schools to be as good as new** and have money in the bank, plans and a published time line to fulfill our promise to remodel all of our remaining schools that are not yet to our standard.
- We have a financial plan to build a **new central administration facility** that will improve effectiveness and efficiency and allow dollars that, in the past have been used for maintenance of our old central facilities, to be used for programs for students.
- We have searched for, purchased and successfully implemented **curriculum and technology programs that meet the learning needs** of our students.
- We have embedded the **Middle School Competency Project and the Culminating Exhibition** in our day-to-day work.
- We have improved **nutrition standards** for students.
- We have hired more than **1,432 excellent new staff** members.
- We have taught our students how to **give back to the community** that does so much for them.
- **We all work together**, help one another and remain focused on our goal of helping each student learn to a high standard and graduate from high school.
- We have learned **what can be accomplished by a team**.

We have accomplished all this together while regulations have increased, discretionary funds have decreased, and our student population has grown and become more diverse. For example: In 2000 we served 960 students speaking 34 different languages in our English Language Learner Program while today we are effectively serving 1,637 students speaking 52 different languages.

It has been an honor to live and work in a community that supports its children, with families who value education, and with students who work hard and respect others. It has also been my great pleasure to have worked closely with seven dedicated members of your board of directors and with an exemplary leadership team, excellent classified staff and many quality professional educators.

I would like to **thank you for having confidence in my ability** to lead this amazing district and for giving me the opportunity to work in an organization that is made up of so many dedicated people who work hard every day doing the world's most important work on behalf of each student. I wish you and the entire school district community continuing success.

Madsen, Cooper and Dutton were on the board and among those to hire Whitehead as Everett's superintendent eight years ago. "Carol stood out among candidates because of her outstanding intellect, her passion and her proven leadership qualities," said Dutton. "Her previous experience in the district was also a draw as she had many connections with a number of schools and staff."

Cooper remembers, "We were looking for someone who would focus resources on student learning. We were looking for measurable improvement in student learning. Carol was the best choice then, and district data proves she has done everything we expected and more."

Ed Petersen, one of the board's newest members, noted, "The district has strong infrastructure and a passionate focus on individual student achievement—a legacy of Dr. Whitehead's tenure and her visionary leadership which embraces the new diversity in our district and progressive ideas for 21st century learning in a global context."

Board members' comments indicate that Whitehead's leadership achievements are on one hand, the basis for their sadness at her departure, and on the other hand, a source of comfort and a **strong foundation for continued district success**. Cooper summarized the dual feeling when she said, "The district is fiscally sound, has outstanding teachers and an excellent administrative team focused on improving student learning. We have a strategic planning process in place that guides the work of the district and ensures that we will always strive for continuous improvement."

As Everett's Superintendent, Whitehead was named the **Washington State Superintendent of the Year** in 2004. She was the state president of the Washington Association of School Administrators in 2005-06. In 2005, the Washington Association of School Administrators honored her with a second Award of Merit for her work in Everett, the first one having been given to her in spring 2000 for her work in Bremerton. On Monday, June 30, that same organization is honoring her again with a State Leadership Award.

In 2001, just one year after she became Everett's Superintendent, the **Everett PTSA Council honored her** with an Outstanding Educator Award. Three years later, in 2004, the Everett PTSA Council gave her the coveted Lifetime Membership Award.

In 2006, the National School Public Relations Association honored her community-wide communications plan with the Golden Achievement Award; that same year the Washington School Public Relations Association recognized her **outreach to community members** with a Crystal Apple Award.

"I was pleased to have earned those awards and to have represented the district in leadership positions over the years. However, I have always known each award was less about me and more about this community's support of education. That support has enabled us to achieve so much for students."

The board will meet at a later time to determine what steps to take next about the district's leadership position.

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