

# News Release

## Everett Public Schools

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### Woodside Elementary counselor named *Counselor of the Year*

Richard Cleveland is Washington state's *Elementary Counselor of the Year*. In late February, he was recognized before his peers at the annual Washington State Counseling Association banquet and presented with a plaque to commemorate the honor. On Tuesday, March 25, Woodside principal Wayne Kettler introduced Cleveland to the Everett Public Schools' Board of Directors and outlined why Cleveland is considered the best in the state. When Kettler concluded his description of Cleveland's work, the board applauded in a standing ovation.

Kettler related how, in his first year at Woodside, in the fall of 2006-07, the earliest comments made to him in that new role were about "â€ this amazing counselor we just must keep on staff!" Kettler soon found out why the energetic Cleveland, who was in just his first year of counseling at that time, is a keeper. "Richard has a magical way of working with students right where they are on just what they need — whether that is coaxing first-time kindergartners to be comfortable coming into a classroom or encouraging experienced fifth-graders to stay in a classroom."

"I have seen him work with a particular group of the older boys who needed a deeper understanding of our school rules. These boys were sometimes challenged to make positive decisions. Knowing they needed regular attention, Mr. Cleveland arranged his schedule so that he meets with two groups of these kids each week — staying in touch, being available, and ever so subtly, helping them grow and do right."

Cleveland is a runner and biker, and he uses those sporting interests to capture the interest of his students. "Richard understands that he is a counselor/teacher, and when he is working with students, he uses all the skills and techniques of a master teacher to motivate, inspire, and instill knowledge, understanding, and growth," explains Kettler.

It is not just students who benefit from Cleveland's enthusiasm. He and Woodside's reading specialist, Karen Miller create 40-minute model reading lessons for each grade level. Each month, Cleveland and Miller teach these lessons to students so teachers can use that time to work with other teachers on the school's learning improvement plan goals. The students and staff tell Kettler "the program has been outstanding!"

As a PTA parent, Christa Pederson saw Cleveland's dedication to students the first year he started at Woodside in 2005-06. "He came to after-school, evening, and weekend events. He revamped monthly assemblies and included the kids in skits about character traits." It was Cleveland's idea to pool the resources and energies of three elementary school PTA's so that donations of clothing and food might have a greater impact.

Dr. Cher Edwards is the associate professor and chair of Seattle Pacific University Department of School Counseling and Psychology. In her nomination for the state award, she calls him "an emerging leader in the school counseling profession." She wrote, "He was truly outstanding in our SPU program and continues to be so in his current role â€ His energy is endless, and he is truly passionate about the academic, personal/social, and career success of all students. He is committed to social justice and serving students who are often overlooked. â€ he transcends roles to laugh and play with kids â€ — captivating each and every one â€"

Among other accomplishments noted in his nomination for the state award, Cleveland was recognized for his partnership with Title I to make after-school, extended-day tutoring available for students. Working with the school's Title I staff, Cleveland relies on career curriculum knowledge from his own education and as he says, "filters it through a WASL lens. That way, when students are working on the basics of reading and writing, they are also exploring future career possibilities."

When he returned to Woodside after his February award, Cleveland did not tell anyone about having been named Washington state's Elementary Counselor of the Year. "Oh, no, I learned about it," said Kettler, "from a group of middle school counselors who were working with us on transition plans for our fifth-grade students. Not only is he as amazing as people say, but he is humble too."

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