

NEWS RELEASE

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Evergreen Middle School's academic achievement and leadership honored twice in one week

This week Evergreen Middle School was named one of 86 "Schools of Distinction" by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), and Evergreen Principal Joyce Stewart was named Outstanding Administrator by the Washington Organization for Reading Development (WORD). "Both honors demonstrate Evergreen Middle School's commitment to student success," said Superintendent Carol Whitehead. "We are very proud of the work being done at Evergreen to improve student learning and that it is being recognized by others in the state."

With the "School of Distinction" award, OSPI recognized Evergreen's dramatic improvements in reading and mathematics. All together, the 86 honored "Schools of Distinction" represent the top 5% in the state whose students' reading and math skills have grown extraordinarily over the last six years. To be considered for the award, each school had to meet this year's WASL reading and math targets as well as have an impressive, long-term track record of student learning growth. Evergreen is among only 20 Washington state middle schools to be honored this year. Across the state 51 elementary schools were named as were 15 high schools - out of nearly 2,500 schools in the state.



The same day Stewart received confidential notification about the OSPI recognition, her staff surprised her with the WORD award. Stewart was nominated by her colleague and president of the Everett Reading Council, Beth Shipe, who says, "Joyce leads her staff with enthusiasm and dedication, pledging to do whatever it takes to ensure that all Evergreen students become successful learners that meet and exceed our high standards."

To achieve such academic success at Evergreen Middle School, Stewart promotes education in many ways. She has instituted changes in the master schedule so staff can work together on teams. Students write daily in all classrooms to become more proficient in writing. Sixth-graders are given specifically targeted lessons, and seventh-grade students keep three different composition books in writing, science and math to chronicle their thinking and learning. When students needed additional opportunities for learning, Stewart found a way to fund a late after-school bus so students could stay after school to receive extra help with academics.

"She is instrumental in helping staff align grade-level expectations with assessments and curriculum, supporting this effort with time and resources," says Shipe.

Evergreen has celebrated student performance gains over Stewart's tenure as principal, most recently in 2007:

- Evergreen met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP) benchmarks in every content area and subgroup.
- At 12.6%, our 7th grade reading cohort growth from '06 to '07 more than doubled the rate of growth at any other district middle school.
- With a 5.5% improvement over last year, the eighth-grade block team tallied the second-highest rate of reading improvement among district middle schools.

"Joyce Stewart is an exemplary building principal," says Whitehead. "She is able to help students and staff excel in ways they do not believe to be possible."

Evergreen's honor was featured in the [October 16, 2007](#) edition of *The Herald*.