

**Waggoner, Mary**

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**From:** Waggoner, Mary  
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# ...*NewsLinks* ... *Special Edition*

**A Web-based newsletter for the staff of Everett Public Schools**

Aug. 31, 2010 (*NewsLinks* articles are now [archived on DocuShare](#))

## **MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT – MSP and HSPE results today; election results to be final tomorrow**

### **MSP and HSPE results today – early thoughts and future work**

At 11 this morning, State Superintendent Randy Dorn released state scores for the *Measurements of Student Progress* assessments that elementary and middle school students took last spring. He also reissued scores for the *High School Proficiency Exam* from last spring. In addition, he released preliminary statewide *Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP) data for the state. Until today's release, we did not have state test data against which to compare our student performance.

Congratulations for the work exemplified by the release of this information! Today's news gives us much to celebrate now and much around which to frame our work for this year.

1. Once again, at every grade level tested and in every subject area tested, our students scored above the state's scores. Our middle school scores, compared to state middle school scores, are exceptionally impressive. In some subjects, middle school scores increased over last year at percentages three to ten times greater than the state's increases in those areas.
2. This year, elementary special education students achieved AYP standards in each of our 17 elementary schools – a dramatic change over previous years.
3. More of our students in more subcategories, including special education, are meeting AYP standards each year. (More details about our AYP success follows later in this message.)

[Now that we have our scores and all of the state's scores](#), we can begin more comprehensive analysis of what this data tells us about our next steps to further improve student learning. In most schools, that will begin on Thursday. Today our assessment department is developing individual school PowerPoint® displays of school, district and state comparisons, score trends, and how close to meeting standard subgroups of students are at each grade level in each subject. This data analysis and the resulting instructional strategy adjustments will continue throughout the year as we further refine what it takes to help each student succeed.

### **This year's tests and how they were administered create new benchmarks**

While we engage in this urgent work, we must remember that the MSP and HSPE are different tests from the WASL. In some subjects, these tests measure new academic standards. The time students were allowed to complete tests was shortened from two days to one day, but the number of items students were required to complete was not shortened proportionately. These differences in the tests and the testing conditions have, in many ways, created new benchmarks for us to use among our measures of student performance in the

future. Instead of many years of WASL trend data to use as a benchmark, this year we have the new MSP and HSPE baseline data to begin using to measure our students' learning in the coming years.

***Adequate Yearly Progress* – complex and emotional, reason to celebrate and the right thing to do**

*Adequate Yearly Progress* (AYP) is a term that can trigger powerful reactions for educators, parents and community. Although it is a familiar term, it is one that can make us feel uncomfortable and unsuccessful. By focusing on the moral reason for *No Child Left Behind* – that EACH student can and should succeed – I find the political motivations around AYP less frustrating. As I mentioned in item #3 above, we have much to celebrate about our progress toward reaching AYP benchmarks, and here is why.

The MSP and HSPE tests are used to calculate whether individual schools and the district have met AYP. This is determined by the federal *No Child Left Behind* legislation which mandates that all schools and all school districts will reach a certain percentage of students passing the state's reading and math tests each year. Ultimately, 100 percent of students in all tested subjects and grade levels at all schools nationwide are expected to be at standard by 2014.

A Title I school moves into AYP “needs improvement” status with sanctions after it misses its AYP goals for two consecutive years in the same subject – reading or math. A district moves into “needs improvement” status when it misses making AYP for two consecutive years in all three grade spans (elementary, middle and high school) in any subgroup or category in the same subject area. Schools must meet standard in 37 different subgroups and categories, and districts in 111. Schools and the district must meet these achievement targets in every subgroup and category to make AYP. In other words, there are 37 ways for a school to miss AYP and 111 ways for a district to do so. To exit this “improvement” status and the sanctions that come with it (for Title I schools), a school or a district must meet achievement targets in every category for two consecutive years.

Yes, we do have schools labeled “needs improvement.” Principals and staff in those and every other district school continue to work strategically to improve student learning. There is no question that every school in the district is focused on student achievement. We can see the results of that work in the last three years of AYP data as reported by OSPI.

In 2007-08, the district achieved AYP in **76.7%** of the 111 categories.

In 2008-09, the district achieved AYP in **80.8%** of the 111 categories.

In 2009-10, the district achieved AYP in **92.2%** of the 111 categories.

In 2007-08, we were not required to meet AYP in 38 categories because the number of students in those categories was too few to be considered a reliable sample.

In 2009-10, the number of categories considered as having too few students dropped to 34, and yet the number and percentage of categories in which we achieved AYP jumped to 71 and to 92.2%.

We can conclude from this information that we are achieving AYP for more diverse categories while we are also being held accountable for the performance of more students in diverse categories.

**[These are reasons to celebrate!](#)**

It is unfortunate that the complexity, emotion and politics surrounding AYP can leave impressions of failure instead of opening doors for instructional improvement, for student learning, and for our kids' futures. Opening doors to success is what our staff, school board and your leadership team are committed to. Those doors open when we look deeply and frankly at the performance data for each student and work together to meet each student's learning needs. I look forward to this work with you in the months and years ahead.

Please join me in thanking the professional staff in the assessment department for almost 24/7 work in the last few weeks to ensure that the score results are accurate and available as a tool for you – even before school starts. Once again, we must thank our community for past levy support which gives us the technology to access and analyze rich student data. Once more also, thank you for what you do each day for students.

**Tomorrow may bring another opportunity to say “thank you” to the community**

Today at 5 p.m., the county will publish one more ballot count report. On Wednesday at 1 p.m., the county will certify the election results, and the last two weeks of anticipation will be over. Sometime on Wednesday afternoon or Thursday morning, I'll send you another message announcing the temporary, supplemental levy results and what we

**KEY DATES FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR – important dates and celebrations you won't want to miss planning for now!**

**POLICY & PROCEDURE INFO – links to all policies and procedures are online**

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