

News release



Everett Public Schools

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Gateway Middle and Silver Lake Elementary schools in state's top 5%

The two schools are among only 94 in the state to be honored as Schools of Distinction for their achievement in reading and math

For three years in a row, Gateway Middle School students' improvement on state math and reading test scores has been recognized among the highest 5% in the state. This year, Silver Lake Elementary school's reading and math test scores also reached that high status on tests taken in spring 2010. Both schools will be recognized as *Schools of Distinction* at a ceremony at the Little Theater in downtown Everett. The date and time of that honors ceremony will be announced within the next two weeks.

The two schools' designation as *Schools of Distinction* is being made this year by the [Center for Educational Effectiveness](#) (CEE) and the Washington chapter of [Phi Delta Kappa](#) (PDK). Originally, Washington state school achievement awards were awarded by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and called *State Superintendent's Schools of Distinction-Learning Improvement Award*. In the face of state budget cutbacks, CEE and PDK stepped forward in 2009, recognizing schools for the same improvement criteria as *Great Schools* to assure that schools making continual improvement in student learning be recognized for that work. Thus, the award names have shifted over the years from *Schools of Distinction* to *Great Schools* and back now to *Schools of Distinction*, but the award's rigorous requirements to improve student learning have stayed the same.

"This award affirms step-by-step improvement over time, which is all we can ask of each learner. Lots of intentional work has been done by parents, staff, and students to achieve this distinction. We are energized by the results and proud to be recognized as a school community that prioritizes progress for its students," said Gateway Principal Peter Scott.

The award, under its different names, has been given since 2007, and Gateway has been a recipient since 2008. It is one of only two middle schools in the state to have earned the distinction three times.

Silver Lake's first year for the award is being received by families and staff with great enthusiasm. "Silver Lake teachers are truly dedicated to each student's learning," said Principal Mary O'Brien. "While state test scores are only one measure of how and what students are learning, this recognition of the fact that our students' reading and math scores have steadily improved over five years is an extremely fulfilling honor. We are very much looking forward to the official celebration event so we can share this with our students and our families."

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Everett Public Schools Superintendent Gary Cohn also emphasized the award's significance for learning improvement over time. "It is one thing to have a one or two year improvement in scores," he noted. "We celebrate those individual year improvements as significant milestones. To maintain that upward trend line over time reflects a concerted plan and a culture of effective teaching and partnering focused on each student's learning. As an entire district, we anticipate the awards ceremony for Gateway and Silver Lake."

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