

## News release



Everett Public Schools

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### **Everett Public Schools wins honorable mention in 2011 Magna Awards**

***Work to improve high school graduation rates earns high praise***

Everett Public Schools has been named an honorable mention recipient in the *American School Board Journal's* (ASBJ) 17th annual Magna Awards program.

Everett is being honored in the 5,000 to 20,000 enrollment category. In 2003, only 50 percent of students entering the district's three high schools were graduating. A district team, entitled the *On Time Graduation Task Force*, was convened by the school board to address the problem. The team analyzed data, recommended instructional changes, and worked to overcome barriers to graduation. Today, the district's on-time graduation rate tops 82 percent. The task force still meets weekly to continue their good work.

Board President Ed Petersen expressed pride on behalf of the board about receiving this award and more pleased at what the award means for students. "Nine out of 10 of Everett Public Schools students are graduating and eight of these are doing it in four years. It's not the number of years it takes to graduate but earning a diploma that counts. We are pleased to share our success story and strategies with other school boards and districts.

"Those who look at those strategies and seek to duplicate our success will see that the system works because we have had state I-728 dollars to fund it. Without funding as a basis for extra support for students achieving graduation hurdles, we will be challenged to maintain this level of success. That will be a shame for students, a shame for our state's funding system and a shameful loss of economic and human potential."

The Magna Awards recognize districts across the country for outstanding programs that advance student learning and encourage community involvement in schools. ASBJ initiated the Magna Awards in 1995 to recognize school boards for taking bold and innovative steps to improve their educational programs. An independent panel of school board members, administrators, and other educators selected winners from more than 350 submissions. This year's nominations came from 40 states.

The 2011 winners are highlighted in a special supplement to the April issue of ASBJ and will be formally recognized on Saturday, April 9, at the Best Practices for School Leaders Luncheon, which is part of NSBA's 71st annual conference.

In addition to the ASBJ supplement, the district's winning entry will be posted on the Magna Awards website and added to the program's searchable best practices database. Both can be found at [www.asbj.com/magna](http://www.asbj.com/magna).

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