

## News release



Everett Public Schools

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### **Joan Litzkow is Everett Public Schools *Teacher of the Year***

***Woodside library media specialist weaves together science learning and love for reading***

“Little did I know at the age of 12, that answering a call to volunteer for a summer program for disabled children would give birth to a passion for teaching that would follow me through the rest of my life.”

That description of a 1966 summer experience was the opening line to Joan Litzkow’s professional biography in her candidacy packet as a contender for the district’s top honor for a teacher.

Litzkow has been an integral member of the Woodside staff since 1986 and taught kindergarten, first-, second- and fifth-grade before becoming the library media specialist in 2004. From that central role in the school Litzkow is credited for sparking excitement and enthusiasm for science – not just among students, but among her colleagues as well.



When introducing Litzkow to the school board on June 14, Area Director Jim McNally noted, “Joan not only emphasizes the importance of science knowledge but the fun of science. Woodside’s annual science fair involves all students in an inquiry-based project that they must explain. Not only must they detail the project process, but students engage in sophisticated reflection of what they learned in the process.”

Litzkow is a member of the district’s science advisory committee and is passionate about inspiring teachers to make the best use of the learning resources in the district’s Lively Environmental Center.

Principal Betty Cobbs calls Litzkow’s educational leadership and commitment “superb” and notes Litzkow’s creative approach to all she does – and her willingness to share her expertise for the benefit of all. “She studies the test scores for us, helping to determine what the instructional focus should be, based upon student learning data. She serves on the science cadre and is already planning for next school year’s focus.”

(more)

Litzkow earned high praise from Woodside parent Rachel Whittingham who once had concerns about a library book her daughter brought home and found an understanding, open and satisfying response from Litzkow. That daughter, now in fifth-grade “routinely comes home with a new book from the library ... without fail, she tells me that Mrs. Litzkow recommended the book.”

Whittingham noted that Litzkow is always willing to help with the PTA book fair. “Using personal time to help this event succeed is a testimony to her dedication to Woodside’s students; by helping the event succeed, she helps students succeed.”

Upon accepting the award, Joan said, “It is truly amazing to get an award for something you love to do – and especially to get it from a district I’ve enjoyed being with for so very long. The best part of being in this district is knowing you are not alone. I could call up a number of people who have helped me along and whose energy and focus are a part of what I do.” Litzkow also credited Betty Cobbs and Dr. Cohn for their high-level caliber of instructional leadership in the district.

Director Russell was especially impressed by Litzkow’s acknowledgement of others who have helped her succeed. “Her acknowledgement of the role her colleagues and administrators play in her success speaks momentously of the collaborative spirit of this district and of how important it is that we foster ways for all of our staff to have time to collaborate.”

Indeed, it seems that collaboration is at the heart of Litzkow’s educational philosophy. The last words in her candidate packet are, “We all have one goal – to see our students achieve to their full potential so that they can go out into the world empowered and ready to make a difference. I think we can do this faster and better if we all work together.”

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