

News release



Everett Public Schools

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For more information:

[Mary Waggoner](#), Director of Communications, 425-385-4040

Washington Aerospace Scholars are *going to Mars!*

Cascade High student and staff competing in Washington Aerospace Scholars program to design human mission to Mars

Cascade High School 11th-grader Amir Rikabi and CHS teacher Stephanie VanderHelm are team members of the 2012-13, seventh annual Washington Aerospace Scholars (WAS) program.

As a student, Rikabi is among only 282 high school juniors from just 119 different public, private and home-school organizations across Washington state.

Over the next five months, students will tackle online courses to qualify for one of just 160 Summer Residency session slots. Their work in the competition will be supported by professional engineers, scientists, university students and teachers like VanderHelm. Students will also tour engineering facilities and laboratories, complete team engineering challenges, and meet successful and influential leaders working in STEM careers.



The students' mission in the competition is to design a human mission to Mars.

The WAS program is a free, competitive, science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) education program for Washington state high school juniors affiliated with NASA Johnson Space Center's National High School Aerospace Scholars program and has partner programs in Texas, Virginia and Idaho. Its primary goal is to excite and prepare students to pursue STEM-related careers. NASA and the University of Washington have helped develop the curriculum for the program.

Since WAS launched in 2006, more than 1,400 students from 299 different public, private, and home-school organizations in 158 public school districts have taken part. The WAS alumni association tracks Summer Residency participants after they graduate high school. The results indicate the program has an impact on student career choices. More than **70 percent** of the program's 862 program alumni are working toward college degrees in science, technology, engineering or mathematics (STEM) fields.

[Washington Aerospace Scholars applications](#) for the 2013-14 program will be available late summer 2013 for Washington state high school juniors residents with at least a 3.0 grade-point average.

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