

News release



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Cedar Wood Principal David Jones honored as county *Distinguished Principal* Regional honor places him as candidate for State Principal of the Year Award



[Cedar Wood Elementary School](#) is one of only ten of Washington state's 1,011 public elementary schools to have earned the [Washington Achievement Award](#) every year for the past four years – in recognition of continued success closing the achievement gap and increasing the percent of students exceeding academic standards.

Now, the school's Principal, Dr. David Jones, has been selected as the county's *Distinguished Elementary Principal*. That honor places him in the running as a [Washington Elementary Principal of the Year](#) and potentially as a candidate for the national honor.

Assistant Superintendent Peter Scott described Cedar Wood as a “dynamic place” and “one of the highest-achieving schools in the state – at any level and by multiple measures. The Cedar Wood community exemplifies the growth mindset ... fostering deeper levels of learning among students.”

Indeed, student learning among Cedar Wood's students is evident in state test scores. In the last four years, more than 90 percent of students (and as many as 99 percent!) have met standard in reading, writing, math and science – with only two exceptions. In 2010-11, in third-grade, 89.5 percent met math standards. In 2009-10 87.7 percent of fifth graders met the science standard. Cedar Wood has been named five times with state-level awards – in 2009 and 2010 with a *Washington Achievement Award*, in 2011 with another *Washington Achievement Award* and as a [School of Distinction](#). In 2012, the work of students and staff earned yet another *Washington Achievement Award*. Each of these awards is earned by successive years of consistent student achievement.



Jones is often seen in the classrooms interacting with students and asking questions

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“At a school such as Cedar Wood, where the percentage of students meeting standard is consistently at and above the 90 percent range, it is increasingly difficult to maintain growth each year,” notes Superintendent Gary Cohn. “It might be easy for some to be satisfied with such stellar results. Not so with David and the Cedar Wood staff.”

Often mentioned by those involved in Jones' nomination is his passion not only for student learning, but for adults to model that learning and apply it to helping students achieve. Scott notes, “David was instrumental in having the foresight several years ago to begin planting seeds of adult professional learning pertaining to the Common Core State Standards. David leads this effort with a distributive, staff-empowering style that allows his teachers to deeply engage and apply their learning.”

In a letter of nomination for Jones' state award, Cedar Wood teacher Mark Dersom wrote, “At the core of Dr. Jones' work is his drive to push each of us to higher levels of proficiency, both professionally and personally. Dr. Jones exemplifies this philosophy, completing the [National Board Certification Program for Principals](#) in its pilot year while also taking up running marathons, ultimately earning entry into the Boston Marathon the past two years. This mindset and personal example gives the staff, students and community a clear ‘we can do it!’ attitude and teaches us that it is only through steady attention to a high goal that we succeed.”

The school's culture embraces and supports academic success and more. Hugely popular and deeply traditional is the school's Friday morning running club – more than 300 students and parents run before school each week – rain or shine. “Strong minds go hand in hand with strong bodies,” Jones believes. He can be found on most Friday mornings running with and encouraging students, staff and parents to meet and exceed their physical and academic goals.

In 2011 Jones was among only 600 principals in the country selected to be part of the first National Board Certification for Principals. Jones and Brenda Fuglevand, principal of Mill Creek Elementary School, co-lead the Washington team as volunteers.

He and the other chosen eight Washington principals were among only 119 in the country who ultimately completed the program. “I am proud to have helped my colleagues grow and finish,” he said.



His PTSA leaders say of him, “... it is truly the intangibles that make Dr. Jones so special. Things like the fact that he knows the names of 600+ students and greets them regularly with high fives before school and in the hallways.” Parent involvement at Cedar Wood includes dads and moms. Three out of every four fathers served as Watch D.O.G.S (**D**ads **O**f **G**reat **S**tudents) at Cedar Wood at least once last year – volunteering in classrooms and experiencing the academic rigor their children encounter daily.

Characteristically humble about his award, Jones turned its receipt into an opportunity to thank others. “The award is recognition of the work we are all doing collectively to serve the children and families in the Cedar Wood neighborhood. It is not lost on me that I could not be doing this work without the support of a strong school district.”

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