

From: [Superintendent](#)
To: [EPS.MailList](#)
Subject: Spring Success and Compassion
Date: Friday, April 18, 2014 10:00:07 AM

Dear Colleague:

April showers bring May flowers – AND incredible affirmation of our good work!

I'm simply delighted to announce that we have another **five schools** honored this year as *Washington Schools of Achievement*. (That is five of only 413 so honored in the state!)

This “embargoed” news was announced on Monday, and it's been darned hard to hold back sharing it ahead of the OSPI “official” announcement.

Now that the media embargo has officially lifted, let it be known that Cedar Wood, Silver Lake, Woodside, Madison and Gateway are 2013 *Washington Schools of Achievement Award* winners based upon continuous, sustained student learning improvement.

- **Cedar Wood** earned three separate achievement awards – the *High Progress Award*, the *Overall Excellence Award* and the *Math Growth Award*.
- **Madison**, which earned a national Title I award earlier this year, has also earned a state achievement *High Progress Award* for 2013.
- **Silver Lake** earned two separate achievement awards – the *High Progress Award* and the *Overall Excellence Award*.
- **Woodside** was recognized with an *Overall Excellence Award*.
- **Gateway**, which has been a state School of Achievement since the awards program began, earned a *Reading Growth Award*.

What do these individual awards mean? Each denotes specific ways these schools have fostered continuous improvement for students:

- **Overall Excellence** – Cedar Wood, Silver Lake and Woodside earned this award in one of two ways:
 - Students reached Annual Measurable Objectives (AMOs) in reading and math for the last three years.
 - They are among the top five percent of state schools, based upon a three-year Revised Achievement Index (AI)
- **High Progress** – Cedar Wood, Madison and Silver Lake earned this award because they are in the top 10 percent of Washington schools whose students in each demographic group have made the most progress over the last three years.
- **Reading Growth and Mathematics Growth Awards** – Cedar Wood earned special recognition for math, and Gateway earned it for reading because each is in the state's top five percent of schools whose students are improving in math or reading skills, based upon median growth percentiles in those

subjects.

These latest awards add to a growing list of our schools that have won state and federal honors for student learning improvement since 2005. In that decade, schools in our district have been listed 75 times as among the state or nation's best at meeting individual student learning.

We can all share the pride of these five schools because we have all helped achieve this success through collaboration, professional development, community partnerships and a shared mission and vision – just as we can share in the success of our latest graduation rate improvements.

Right before spring break, OSPI announced the state's graduation rates, and ours have once again risen – both for students who are graduating in four years and those taking five years to reach that goal.

Every school and every staff member played a part in helping those 2013 seniors walk across the stage – and to walk it in greater numbers than in the past. Thank you for that!

Thank you and congratulations also to the finance staff whose careful stewardship of local tax dollars has once again saved taxpayers money – this time more than \$3 million. When we refinance our bonds to pay a lower rate, it's in the same spirit as when homeowners refinance a mortgage to pay a lower rate. In the last fourteen years, those refinance actions have saved more than \$27 million for taxpayers within Everett Public Schools.

In case you don't see these news items in local media, links to the news releases about [2013 graduation rate increases](#) and bond [refinance savings](#) are on our website. While you are at it, check out the kudos the state auditor had in his [clean audit report](#) this year. The news about the five [Schools of Achievement](#) went up on the Web and out to media this morning. (That release also includes the 10-year list of schools in our district being honored with state and federal awards 75 times.)

Thank you as well for the support going to the schools and communities devastated by the mudslide last month. That tragedy happened on a Saturday, and by the following Monday (which was the first day of spring break) our students and staff had already stepped up to volunteer and were organizing relief efforts.

The message below came to me last week from County Executive John Lovick. I'm sharing his "thank you" because it is so clear what a big difference small actions can make.

First of all, I'm pleased to know that President Obama will visit the site on April 22, exactly one month after the slide hit. No photograph can adequately convey the magnitude of the damage, and I'm appreciative that he'll see the devastation firsthand. But even more, a presidential visit shows his and the nation's concern, which is comforting to many during this

difficult time.

While he's here, he'll also see how the Oso, Darrington, and Arlington communities are pulling together. Along with the searchers, there are hundreds of people staffing the EOC, as well the Darrington and Arlington command posts – about 1,000 people altogether. Many are Snohomish County employees, and many are from the 117 outside agencies that are assisting in the effort. In addition, countless others are helping in other ways, like cooking meals and washing clothes for the searchers.

Each of us plays a role in the effort, and I want to again thank you for what you're doing to help in the aftermath of this devastating event. I'm proud of our Snohomish County family and grateful to each of you.

I know the Oso community will persevere, and I know our county will heal. In truth, I'm not ashamed to admit that I have a daily "Oso moment," when the sorrow and devastation overwhelms me. With you, I grieve with the families lost and shattered. But then I look around, and I see the determination of the searchers, the dedication of our staff, and the compassion of everyone who's helping.

Words can't describe the utter heartbreak and despair in concert with the absolute best of humankind. It's an amazing thing to witness, and it gives me hope.

Yesterday I attended an Emerson assembly during which a third-grade student gave the United Way more than \$2,300 her school had collected to support relief efforts. Her leadership story and the compassion of her school community exemplify similar efforts I've seen or heard about at each of our schools where the culture you foster generates high standards of teaching and learning and caring for others.

Warm wishes,

Gary