

News release



Nov. 19, 2014

For more information:

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

[Dr. Molly Ringo](#), Assistant Superintendent of Teaching and Learning, 425-385-4023

Silver Lake Elementary earns state's top honors – again!

Students have shown outstanding math and reading improvement for five consecutive years. The school's five-year history of earning the award demonstrates eight straight years of improvement.

When schools show consistent improvement trends over a long period, that catches the attention of groups looking for exceptional educational practices. It also earns some of those schools the title [School of Distinction](#). Only 101 schools in the state met the criteria for the 2014 award – five years of students having continuously improved reading and math scores.

As Superintendent Gary Cohn points out, "Sustaining continuous improvement is the key to being selected for this award. We all know student learning can go up and down for a number of reasons. Silver Lake has earned this award for a continued upward trend over the five years required for this year's award and even longer."

As Cohn alludes, this is not Silver Lake's first year as a *School of Distinction*. This marks the fifth year of that honor. This means Silver Lake students' math and reading skills have continually improved over the last eight consecutive years and that the school has been among the state's top 5 percent of continuously improving elementary schools since 2010.

"Improving scores one or two years in a row is an accomplishment," notes Superintendent Gary Cohn. "Holding and achieving that continuous improvement standard for five years is very difficult. Such a sustained improvement track record means the students, their families, the staff and the school system are in sync with quality instruction, high expectations and high support."

---more---



Silver Lake Elementary staff members now have five *School of Distinction* banners to display – demonstrating consistently improved math and reading scores. The award is given annually to only the state's top 5 percent of schools meeting that continuous, sustained student learning improvement. On Nov. 18, Silver Lake staff was honored at a board of directors meeting.

[The Center for Educational Effectiveness](#) (CEE) is the organization that tracks state school achievement trends and is among those groups that give the *School of Distinction* awards. CEE President Greg Lobdell described the vast difference among the state's award-winning schools, "These schools are from all regions of the state, all sizes of towns, and with 2.7 percent to 100 percent poverty. Enrollment in these schools of English Language Learners is as high as 40 percent. These schools demonstrate the significant improvement occurring all across our state's diverse public schools."

Four out of ten students at Silver Lake qualify for free or reduced lunch. One out of ten speaks a language other than English. "Students living in poverty and coming to school without English language skills face special challenges that can interfere with learning unless a school has supports for them," explains Dr. Molly Ringo, the district's assistant superintendent of teaching and learning for the central region. "The Silver Lake staff work together and with families to circumvent those challenges. Silver Lake is a living example of a learning community with a growth mindset. They work strategically to meet the learning needs of each child."

Teachers as instructional leaders, making [Instructional Rounds](#)

Silver Lake Principal Jen Lawler recently described one of those strategic ways Silver Lake focuses on sustained and continuously improved student learning. "The practice of [Instructional Rounds](#) was developed at Harvard as a way for administrators to learn more about the ways teachers teach and what instructional strategies are most effective. Originally, *Instructional Rounds* were ways administrators could watch different styles of teaching and determine how to infuse the best teaching strategies throughout a school."

At Silver Lake this year, the teachers are making *Instructional Rounds* focused specifically on student engagement. "Teachers believe that students who are truly and deeply engaged in classroom activities are learning at higher levels because their curiosity and self-motivation kicks in. But are ALL Silver Lake students truly engaged? We've set out this year to answer that question and to ensure the answer is 'yes.'"

In their first *Instructional Rounds* cycle, teachers spent two days in teams with a teacher at each grade level (K-5). They visited other teachers' classrooms and watched students – looking for and noting "student engagement." Then they met, compared notes and considered patterns of engagement they had seen. "They focused on what they saw *students* doing rather than upon what teachers were doing." This, explained Lawler, is a different perspective focused on result instead of cause.

"Teachers believe that students who are truly and deeply engaged in classroom activities are learning at higher levels because their curiosity and self-motivation kicks in. But are ALL Silver Lake students truly engaged? We've set out this year to answer that question and to ensure the answer is 'yes.'"

After the first round, one Silver Lake teacher wrote, "This process helped me to really step back and analyze 'What I am actually doing' with my students vs. what I think I am having students do. It helped me to question, 'Is my teaching engaging, appropriate and effective? How do I know?'"

Another said, "If all students were engaged in their learning, students would be inspired by their curiosity. They would ask their own questions and want to learn more. So, adults need to lead less, and students need to lead more."

---more---

Superintendent Cohn notes that Silver Lake staff and “Staff at every other school in the district are deeply analyzing not just *what* is taught but *how* teachers are using their professional skills and artistry to engage students, spark their curiosity and ignite self-motivated learning.”

Other schools in the district have earned a *School of Distinction* award and other state awards since 2005. Although the names of the awards have changed, and the awards are given for various ways the schools have sustained learning, the emphasis and recognition of sustained improvement is common thread.

Everett Public Schools award-winning schools 2005-2014

(Over time, the names of some awards have changed. Information about each award is available on website of [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction](#).)

Year	Award	School
2005	Title I Improvement Award	Hawthorne Elementary
2005	Title I Improvement Award	Lowell Elementary
2005	Title I Improvement Award	Madison Elementary
2006	Title I Improvement Award	Emerson Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Emerson Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Garfield Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Jackson Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Lowell Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Madison Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2007	Title I Improvement Award	Whittier Elementary
2008	Title I Improvement Award	Emerson Elementary
2008	School of Distinction	Evergreen Middle
2008	School of Distinction	Gateway Middle
2008	School of Distinction	Heatherwood Middle
2008	Title I Improvement Award	Jackson Elementary
2008	Title I Improvement Award	Whittier Elementary

---more---



Staff of award-winning schools are honored at school board meetings. Above, Gateway Middle School in 2009. Below, Woodside Elementary School in 2010.



Year	Award	School
2009	Washington Achievement Award	Cedar Wood Elementary
2009	Great School	Gateway Middle
2009	Washington Achievement Award	Gateway Middle
2009	Title I Improvement Award	Madison Elementary
2009	Washington Achievement Award	Mill Creek Elementary
2009	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Firs Elementary
2009	Title I Improvement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Cedar Wood Elementary
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Evergreen Middle
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Garfield Elementary
2010	School of Distinction	Gateway Middle
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Gateway Middle
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Mill Creek Elementary
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Firs Elementary
2010	School of Distinction	Silver Lake Elementary
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2010	Washington Achievement Award	Woodside Elementary
2011	School of Distinction	Cedar Wood Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Cedar Wood Elementary
2011	School of Distinction	Eisenhower Middle
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Eisenhower Middle
2011	College Board Advanced Placement Honor Roll	Everett Public Schools
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Evergreen Middle
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Forest View Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Garfield Elementary
2011	School of Distinction	Gateway Middle
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Gateway Middle
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Heatherwood Middle
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Henry M. Jackson High
2011	Title I Improvement Award	Jackson Elementary
2011	Title I Improvement Award	Madison Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Mill Creek Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Port Gardner
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Firs Elementary
2011	School of Distinction	Silver Lake Elementary
2011	Title I Academic Achievement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2011	Washington Achievement Award	Woodside Elementary

---more---



This was Cedar Wood Elementary's award presentation with state dignitaries in 2010.



Silver Firs Elementary staff were honored in 2010 for their work and designation as a state school of achievement.



Eisenhower Middle School earned state awards in 2012, and staff members accepted the award at a school board meeting.



In 2011, the district earned an international Advanced Placement award for continually increasing the number of AP classes, students taking classes and AP earning high scores on AP tests.

Year	Award	School
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Cedar Wood Elementary
2012	School of Distinction	Eisenhower Middle
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Forest View Elementary
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Gateway Middle
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Heatherwood Middle
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Jefferson Elementary
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Mill Creek Elementary
2012	School of Distinction	Silver Lake Elementary
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2012	Washington Achievement Award	Woodside Elementary
2013	School of Distinction	North Middle
2013	School of Distinction	Silver Lake Elementary
2013	Title I Continued Academic Progress Award	Silver Lake Elementary
2013	National Title I Distinguished School	Madison Elementary
2014	School of Distinction	Silver Lake Elementary

---end---

Madison Elementary teachers celebrate with sparkling water at news of their 2013 *National Title I Distinguished School*.

