



Our students will lead and shape the future

News release

Feb. 2, 2016

Tony Byrd to be state's Teach For America Executive Director in July

After finishing this school year in Everett, Byrd will continue equity and access work on state level.

Dr. Tony Byrd credits Teach for America (TFA) for showing him the educational path which is his passion today. After more than two decades of teaching and school and district leadership in California and Washington, Byrd will become the leader of TFA – Washington in July.

"I've spent my entire career focused on equity and social justice, trying to find ways to help the most kids, especially kids in underserved communities," Byrd said. "Teach For America launched my direction, and I want to help the organization become a strong pipeline for teachers and leaders who can take our state to the next level."

Byrd will complete this school year as associate superintendent of curriculum, assessment and special programs in Everett Public Schools before leaving for his new position.

Since joining the district in 2013, Byrd has helped establish an integrated K-12 STEM (science, technology engineering and math) program in the district. The number of students from all demographic groups enrolling in and succeeding in Advanced Placement, College in the High School, and other challenging courses has increased under Byrd's leadership. Byrd has also contributed to the district's expansion of middle and elementary school challenging course options. Aspects of Byrd's leadership are reflected in Everett Public Schools K-12 integrated STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) programs, implementation of AP Capstone at all comprehensive high schools, and computer science classes offered at each high school. Byrd's leadership to expand more challenging options extends to elementary school where students as young as kindergarten now have opportunities for curriculum previously not available until second grade.

Superintendent Gary Cohn credits Byrd with deepening and strengthening partnerships with both preschool and higher education. "Tony's leadership of the [*regional Pre-Kindergarten to Third Grade Coalition*](#) established and expanded links among our schools and community preschools. Our teachers and preschool teachers are working and learning together to ensure kindergartners are ready for school, and thus on track for success through high school and beyond. At the other end of the spectrum, we have forged new relationships with partners in support of our long-standing and successful work with Everett Community College to create smoother transitions from high school to college and career.

"Tony's work at the state will continue to benefit Everett Public Schools. TFA work includes expanding educational equity for children in poverty – and for bringing a more ethnically diverse teaching corps into Washington schools. Four out of 10 of the students in our schools are living in poverty, and it's more than five out of ten in our elementary schools. Our district is growing. We will have 2,000 more students in the next seven years, and it's very likely we'll see the number of languages spoken by our students exceed 100. We welcome highly qualified and dedicated teachers of color to join the corps of teachers now focusing on helping each student succeed."

(more)

Byrd entered the education sector as a Teach For America corps member in 1993. His experience as a bilingual sixth grade teacher in a low-income school in Pasadena, Calif., prompted him to pursue advanced degrees in education policy and education administration at Stanford University and to dedicate his life to public education. He has served as a bilingual teacher, principal, teacher recruiter, school district leader and adjunct lecturer for future principals and administrators over the past two decades.

Byrd has worked in Washington schools since 2002. He served 11 years as a principal and assistant superintendent at Edmonds Public Schools, and is in his third year as associate superintendent of curriculum, assessment and special programs at Everett Public Schools.

“Tony has been integral in leading some of the district’s major strategic efforts,” noted Everett Public Schools’ superintendent, Dr. Gary Cohn. “His passion for equity is reflected in the numbers of students now taking Advanced Placement classes and the expansion of Highly Capable programs for more underserved elementary populations at more grade levels.

“Tony’s ability to foster relationships, inspire collaboration and stimulate creativity has been invaluable in our efforts to implement our strategic plan. While we look forward to the possibilities he brings to our district and others seeking a more diverse work force, we will certainly miss his leadership.” Cohn added.

Byrd’s appointment comes as Washington schools are looking for ways to combat teacher shortages and close diversity gaps between their faculty and students. Approximately 13 percent of teachers statewide identify as people of color, while 42 percent of students identify as people of color. Many rural districts are grappling with teacher recruitment and retention, particularly in federally designated shortage areas of early childhood, English language learners, math, science, and special education.

Many Teach For America alumni like Byrd are committed to students in Washington. Across the state, more than 150 teachers, 15 principals or assistant principals, and three district level leaders began their education careers with Teach For America in Washington or another state.

Dr. Peter Scott, now an assistant superintendent in Everett Public Schools, is also a Teach For America corps alum. Superintendent Cohn announced today his appointment of Scott to be Associate Superintendent in Byrd’s place starting July 1, 2016.

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