

News release



Everett Public Schools

July 3, 2012

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NJROTC instructor is Everett's *Teacher of the Year*

Commander Richard Gile is among those being considered as state Teacher of the Year

When Commander Gile stepped into the position as Senior Naval Science Instructor in the NJROTC classroom at Everett High in 2007, he faced a dwindling number of student cadets – just 41 of them – and a challenge to reinvigorate the program before it fell victim to dwindling student interest and budget cuts.

Today, the program has more than doubled in size and draws male and female cadets from the district's other high schools. In 2011, the Everett High NJROTC program was recognized by the U.S. Navy as the ["most improved" in the country](#) and acknowledged for [high academic achievements](#).



Everett High NJROTC cadets on recent trip to Naval Station Bremerton

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While he would quickly give credit for that success and the program's resurgence to its cadets, the energy for the program's dramatic turnaround is largely due to Giles' vision, core values and teaching by example – which he says he first learned as a Navy ground school and flight instructor. In those programs, he says, the sailors' successes came from within. "They only needed a vision of the future, the tools to achieve it and someone who believed unconditionally that they could achieve their goals. And they did! Time after time."

Belief in his cadets' abilities and willingness to do what it takes to help them find their way were among the reasons Giles sought to foster community pride and community service in the NJROTC curriculum. He established working relationships with city departments such as Everett Parks, the Animal Shelter and the Senior Citizens Center. The unit went from zero community service hours to more than 3,000 in 2011-12. Today, his unit is the "go to" group to ask for help with community events, to present the colors, direct traffic, provide logistics for a food drive, even *cadethandle* the garbage cans after a parade.

Giles lives what he expects of his student cadets. He was recently honored by the Northwest Naval Aviation Association as "Man of the Year" for his personal community involvement.

For the last two years, when flags have flown at half-staff to honor fallen service personnel, Giles has written a tribute to each soldier. Each story of each life lost he considers "a sacred duty to help understand that there was a person behind that name." Originally the stories circulated only within the school district. However, others caught word of his tributes, and his stories are now circulated throughout the state.

Former district Executive Director Jim McNally (now retired) was responsible for bringing Giles to the district. In his nomination of Giles as Teacher of the Year, McNally wrote, "His work with students and staff has resulted in young people thriving and having a better chance to have fully productive and satisfying lives. Students enter his program as inexperienced and often confused youths and leave as young adults with leadership skills, strong character and ambition to serve."

McNally's pleasure at seeing Giles named district Teacher of the Year was doubled when the Northwest Educational Service District (NWESD) announced that Giles was also their choice as NWEST Regional Teacher of the Year. "Rick will now represent Everett Public Schools at the state and could potentially be the Washington State Teacher of the Year this fall," smiled McNally, "Maybe even the national Teacher of the Year for 2013."

This would be the second time in three years that a local teacher also was named the regional Teacher of the Year and was among those from whom the state Teacher of the Year was chosen. Two years ago [Joanne Buiteweg](#), then a teacher at Sequoia, also earned local and regional honors.

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