



News release

June 4, 2024

Everett Public Schools honors legacy of dedication at annual retirement celebration



Everett, WA— Everett Public Schools (EPS) is proud to announce its annual retirement celebration, set to take place on June 4 at the Community Resource Center. This year, we honor over 50 retirees who have collectively enriched our district with their unwavering commitment and passion for education.

Among the esteemed retirees are three remarkable individuals whose combined service totals an astounding 135 years. After 51 years of service, Dr. Betty Cobbs, Steve Bertrand, and Kevin Stark, each with 42 years, are concluding their illustrious careers.

Dr. Cobbs began her journey at EPS during her senior year of college and has been a beacon of innovation and leadership. In a program called Project Turnabout, she was interning at Garfield

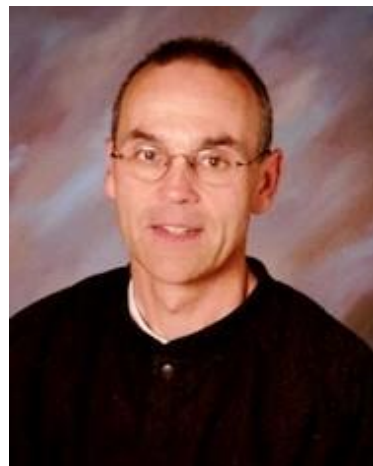
Elementary in Everett Public Schools and after the yearlong intensive teaching experience, she applied and was hired immediately to start teaching in her first classroom at Jefferson Elementary during the 1973-74 school year.

Holding many positions at many different schools and departments over the past 51 years, Cobbs recalls one key milestone during her principalship at Jackson Elementary starting a project to clean up the stream at Pigeon Creek. “I worked with teachers, the Adopt-A-Stream Foundation, and students to reclaim the stream that was once a spawning ground for salmon, but had become a community dumping ground, and no fish had been seen in it for more than 20 years. We cleaned the stream, raised coho salmon from the egg to fry stage in school, and released the salmon fry in the creek, with hopes they would return to spawn,” said Cobbs.

In addition to the revitalization of Pigeon Creek, another memorable moment includes the modernization of Woodside Elementary School, where she has been the principal for the past 15 years, leaving a lasting legacy of educational excellence.

Steve Bertrand’s 42-year tenure has been marked by his dedication to fostering students’ growth in academics, arts, and athletics. His philosophy of taking life one day at a time and focusing on the well-being of students has touched many lives.

Bertrand says a key milestone in his career has been, “the privilege of working with kids in various academic, artistic, and athletic settings and helping them gain competence and confidence through these pursuits during their high school careers.” Some key lessons he’s learned throughout his career have been to take things one day at a time, never underestimate the power of a smile, reaching out to a kid might just make their



day, when possible take time to gain knowledge regarding the reason behind someone's behavior, remove the pronoun "I" from as much as you can, and keep the focus on what's in the best interests of kids. He would like to be remembered as, "Simply someone who quietly worked in the trenches helping kids."



Kevin Stark's journey through Everett Public Schools is truly remarkable. Starting right out of high school as a helper on the ground's crew, and holding positions in utilities, safety and security, and maintenance, Kevin has come full circle ending his career in grounds.

His presence on the big red mower, with his tie-dye shirt and bucket hat, brought joy to many, especially the kids who were ecstatic to get a smile and a wave as he drove by.

Over his 42 years with Everett Public Schools, Kevin has seen not just the district's growth, but also the city itself, from 54,000 to over 110,000 residents. His dedication to his work is matched only by his zest for life outside of it.

As he bids farewell to his career, it's with great appreciation and admiration that Everett Public Schools says goodbye and thank you to Kevin Stark. He's more than just a colleague; he's a shining example of someone who has never met a stranger and who lives life to the fullest. He embodies the spirit of embracing life with open arms and leaving an impact wherever he goes.

"Each year, as we celebrate the careers of our retirees, we are reminded of their profound impact on our community. This year, we are especially moved by the collective legacy of Dr. Cobbs, Mr. Bertrand, and Mr. Stark, whose dedication has been a cornerstone of Everett Public Schools' success," said Dr. Ian Saltzman, superintendent. "Their passion for education and the well-being of every student has been a guiding light for us all. As they transition into retirement, we carry forward their spirit of service and commitment to excellence. On behalf of the entire district, I extend our heartfelt thanks and best wishes for the journey ahead."

As we bid farewell to these extraordinary educators and staff members, Everett Public Schools extends its deepest gratitude for their service. Their contributions have not only shaped the lives of countless students but have also set a standard of excellence for all who follow. We celebrate the beginning of their new chapters and the indelible mark they have left on our community. Here's to the next adventure!

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For more information:

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