

News Release

Everett Public Schools
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Eisenhower students honor military staff and learn dangers of alcohol

At their 2 p.m. Veterans Day assembly on Thursday, November 9, at Eisenhower Middle School, students will honor the school's staff members who are military veterans, currently enlisted military service men and women, and families of enlisted service members.

"News about the military is with us every day," notes Eisenhower Principal David Jones. "But students may not know the names and faces in this school family who are so very closely linked to those news stories. It is important that we take time as a school to reflect on what this means to each of us and to the people we learn and work with every day."

Thursday's assembly has a second message for students — about the dangers inherent in teenage drinking. Attorney General Rob McKenna and Miss Washington Kristen Eddings are bringing this message to only 15 middle schools in the state in an effort coordinated by the Washington State Liquor Control Board (WSLCB).

In a news release about the statewide effort, WSLCB cited a 2005 survey by the Department of Alcohol and Substance Abuse which found that more than one in five eighth-graders had recently used alcohol. This is very worrisome for school people and parents, said Jones. We know more now than ever before about human brain development, and there is a mountain of research demonstrating how harmful alcohol is to the developing teen brain.

Jones sees hope, however. "We are so fortunate to be able to bring this message to our students. Other studies show that students who have frank and informed discussions about alcohol with their parents are much less likely to experiment with it. I'd like to see the topic of alcohol on every family dinner table agenda."

To help begin those discussions in every home, Eisenhower students will receive a simple questionnaire to fill out with their parents at home. If they bring the signed questionnaire back to school, they will receive a free, glow-in-the-dark wristband with the message "Too Smart to Start."

Underage drinking is a leading public health problem in Washington according to WSLCB. This 15-school campaign entitled Start Talking before They Start Drinking, is the first step in a larger effort by the Liquor Control Board and other state prevention and education organizations to expand alcohol education programs to schools. Follow-up assemblies and visits are planned for next spring at additional middle schools throughout the state.

The "Start Talking before They Start Drinking" campaign is, in part, an outgrowth of efforts by key federal agencies involved in alcohol prevention, research, education and treatment, to promote a more coordinated national effort to address underage drinking. The campaign features public service announcements, educational materials, and links to [Web sites with additional information](#).

In 2005, the Washington State Legislature approved an Alcohol Awareness Manager position for the WSLCB to expand the Board's alcohol education efforts and to develop specific programs aimed at middle and high school students. The effort adds an extra dimension to the agency's enforcement, education and licensing programs, all aimed at reducing sale to minors and alcohol misuse.

"This is the first wholly collaborative effort between state agencies focused on middle school students. We have representation from the prevention, enforcement, treatment, and education communities," said Merritt D. Long, chairman of the Washington State Liquor Control Board.