

News Release

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H.M. Jackson High School principal is 2009 WESCO principal of the year

At their board meeting of Feb. 24, Everett Public Schools Board of Directors recognized Principal Terry Cheshire and his recent designation as the 2009 WESCO High School Principal of the Year. The award, organized through the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), is given regionally according to high school membership in the state's athletic conferences.

The person who nominated Cheshire for the award did so anonymously, but the accolades for his work as H.M. Jackson's principal was very public and glowingly appreciative during the school board meeting.

When hired in 2004, Cheshire took over the helm of a 10-year-old high school, "that had not yet matured into the school that both the district and the community expected," according to Executive Director Dr. Molly Ringo who presented the award to Cheshire. "Terry was given a clear charge by then Superintendent Dr. Carol Whitehead to improve the school and to transition from a four-period school day to a six-period schedule. Under Terry's leadership, Jackson High School has blossomed."

Academic improvements under Cheshire's leadership have been impressive. The graduation rate has risen from 61 percent to 89 percent; WASL scores have risen as well. Students in 2004 had a choice of only nine Advanced Placement classes, and today they can choose among 22. H.M. Jackson High's special education program has a thriving balloon business in which those students are learning vital work and business skills and the music programs continue to win awards and recognition.

Parent and community involvement is part of the school's culture. More than 400 parents are members of the school's PTA – an unusually large membership for a high school.

The school's programs and achievements have grown, and so has the school itself. Eleven classrooms have been added to the building since Cheshire became principal. Enrollment today is approximately 2,000 students, and once again, the school is at capacity.

Board President Sue Cooper thanked Cheshire for accepting the charge, for facing the challenges presented when he was hired, and for the accomplishments he has made as principal. "It takes a person with vision and courage and willingness to step up to the plate; you have done all of this with grace and humility– all the while earning unwavering respect from your students, staff, community and this school board."

Ringo announced that Cheshire is among the nominees for the state's highest high school principal award – the 2009 AWSP High School Principal of the Year Award to be announced in October.