



Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

“The Practitioner’s Best Friend”

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To WSASCD Board Members:

Lead, inspire, and educate represent the principle philosophy by which one outstanding administrator deserves recognition for creating and shaping a district that truly educates the “Whole Child”. For the past four years, I have worked closely with Mr. Murphy and observed him meet the professional needs of his staffs and academic, social, and emotional needs of his student population. From these experiences, I witnessed his unique leadership style and passion to develop a learning environment, which advocates a positive, rigorous, and relevant standards based curriculum for ALL students. Superintendent Tom Murphy deserves remarkable recognition for his dedication, leadership and passion for making giant leaps towards increasing student achievement, teacher efficacy, positive parent and community relations, yet he deserves the WSASCD “Educating the Whole Child Award” for his unwavering dedication to help enable all children to develop their gifts and realize their fullest potential.

Mr. Murphy has been a cornerstone of influence in the development and progression for our innovative schools. Even in times of difficulty, when parents and community members desire a more traditional school experience for their children, Mr. Murphy continues to stand strong in his philosophy, that “All truly means ALL”. Mr. Murphy believes that in order to make positive changes in reaching all students academic and emotional needs, educators need to know students well, and through this philosophy based on rigorous and relevant standards based instruction, varied structures, and personal relationships, that’s our best shot at reaching ALL kids.

Since the inception of Tom Murphy’s leadership in the fall of 1999, the identity metamorphosis of the Federal Way Public School, each year, has brought us one step closer to achieving authentic and personal learning communities through the leadership, open-mindedness, and dedication of his vision. The following are a few the programs, policies and practices that Mr. Murphy has led to support the “Whole Child”:

- **Cultural competence:** District staff members attend discussion sessions in cultural competency, and all district employees are learning effective strategies for working with students of poverty. Additionally, staff members are given opportunities to review their beliefs about multiculturalism.
- **Summer Bridge Program:** This free, six-week program provides targeted help for students who are not quite meeting the reading or math standard required for promotion to the next grade level. Bus transportation is provided and breakfast and lunch are served for eligible student. Students are nominated for the program by school staff, and the cost is paid through I-728 funding.
- **English Language Learner (ELL) Program.** ELL teachers work in close collaboration with the student’s classroom teachers and are familiar with the latest research and instructional methodologies, enabling ELL students to meet grade level course expectations.
- **Latino Night School.** In partnership with Highline Community College, the state’s Office of Secondary Education for Migrant Youth, and the South King County Multi-Service Center, we provide a convenient way for Latino students and their families to connect with school and

Barry Hoonan
The Odyssey
School
Bainbridge Island
S.D.

Dr. Sharon
Mowry
Whitworth
College

Mickey Lahmann
OSPI
Representative

Dr. Joan Kingrey
Journal editor
WSU

community resources. High school aged students can take “retrieval credits” and earn a high school diploma or GED. There are English Language Learners English classes for both students and parents.

- **All-Day Kindergarten.** The district implemented a free all-day kindergarten program for students who qualify based on their free and reduced lunch status.
- **AVID (Advancement via Individual Determination).** This program is offered at secondary schools and is based on national model designed to encourage and prepare those students “in the academic middle” who might be the first in their families to attend college. These students have potential for success but do not always enroll in rigorous, college-preparatory classes in high school.
- **Multi-Age GATE:** Full-time Gifted and Talented Education (GATE) services are offered in every elementary school and are structured to serve grades 3, 4 and 5 in a multi-age “looping” classroom. Students are nominated based on 3rd grade assessments, student portfolios, and the Developmentally Accelerated Skills Inventory, a tool for evaluating giftedness in multiple areas. Teachers are specially trained in multi-age classroom methods and culturally competent teaching strategies.
- **Pre-AP (advanced placement) and pre-IB (international baccalaureate) Enrollment:** In grades 6-10, secondary students can enroll in pre-AP and pre-IB courses. Open to everyone, this self-select program replaces the former honors classes.
- **AP, IB and Cambridge Enrollment:** These self-select programs serve grades 9-12 in math, language arts, science and social studies.

Mr. Murphy is an astute and devoted leader of the Federal Way Community and Federal Way Public Schools and deserves merit for his leadership and passionate role in creating something special in public education that embraces the success for ALL students. I believe that Mr. Murphy’s leadership and inspiration to each of his staffs and students models the professionalism that makes fellow educators proud of the positive impact and powerful possibilities that public education can provide for ALL students; it’s with great pride that I recommend him for the WSASCD “Educating the Whole Child” leadership award.

Sincerely,

Joshua J. Garcia, Ed. D
WSASCD, ASCD Representative

WSASCD ♦ 825 Fifth Avenue SE ♦ Olympia, WA 98501
(360) 357-9535