

—PRESS RELEASE—

Washington's Highest Improving Schools Honored: 2016 School of Distinction Award

Bellevue, WA—Sustained improvement over a five-year period in English language arts (ELA), math, and graduation rate is the reason for 94 schools across Washington State being recognized with the *2016 School of Distinction* award today. These schools represent 51 elementary, 20 middle/junior high, 23 high schools, and 6 alternative schools already included in these numbers. The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) in partnership with the Association of Educational Service Districts (AESD), The Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP), Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) and the Washington State Association of Supervision and Curriculum Development (WSASCD), have recognized schools in the top 5% of improvement for their levels. Elementary and middle schools are recognized for sustained improvement in ELA and math achievement. High schools are recognized for sustained improvement in graduation rate over the past five years.

These 94 schools span all regions of the state, from large urban to small rural communities and represent all nine Educational Service Districts (ESD's). Some of the student populations in these schools are as high as 98.5% poverty, and 67% English language learners, as well as high numbers of challenged learners in special education. As Greg Lobdell, CEE CEO and Director of Research states, "Even though the diversity and context of the communities served by each of these schools across our state are vastly different, the hard work represented by this award is the same and the students are the real winners."

This year represents the 10th year that CEE and their partners have recognized schools with the *School of Distinction* award. One school, Wilson High in Tacoma Public Schools has received six consecutive *School of Distinction* awards. Four schools received their fifth award. Five schools received their fourth award. Seven schools received their third award and forty schools received their second award. Thirty-six schools received the SOD award for the first time.

Each Educational Service District in the state will be hosting an award ceremony for the schools served in their region. Dates for these celebrations will be announced through local press releases. John Welch, Superintendent of the Puget Sound ESD in Renton and leading this work as President of the AESD leaders group stated, "As we continue to move forward with new standards and state assessments we continue to see our schools rise to the challenge. This award process highlights our schools' achievements and the need to continue to support the dedicated and talented professionals who serve our students and their families. Congratulations to the students, professional educators and leaders for their exceptional dedication and effort. Well done!"

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The Center for Educational Effectiveness (CEE) is a service, consulting, and research organization dedicated to the mission of partnering with K-12 schools to improve student learning. For additional information, please contact Marilyn McGuire, CEE Vice President, District and School Improvement:

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