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## **Granite Falls Middle School Home to Top AP in the State**

*David Bianchini, "Mr. B," is state's Assistant Principal of the Year*

**VANCOUVER—Feb. 7, 2008**—His students all know him as "Mr. B," but soon everyone will know him as the 2008 Assistant Principal of the Year.

Today David Bianchini was honored during the Association of Washington School Principals' (AWSP) Assistant Principal of the Year luncheon at the Hilton Vancouver Washington. The luncheon is held each year in conjunction with AWSP's Assistant Principals' Conference.

During today's award presentation, Bianchini was treated to a special video presentation created by students at his school. "Awesome" was the most popular word students used to describe the man they affectionately refer to as "Mr. B."

"David is one of the most successful administrators that I have worked with in my 30 years in education," said Joel Thaut, superintendent of Granite Falls School District. "Being a leader comes naturally to David. He knows how to address not only the educational needs of his students, but also how to help them grow and develop into successful young adults," he said.

"If you watch Dave work, you would know he loves his job. You can actually see the caring relationship he has with students," added Thaut. "He is unpretentious, yet carries a confidence that conveys honesty and integrity. He has the best combination of attributes that you could want, and we are very, very fortunate to call him one of our own."

Although Granite Falls' test scores have trended upward, Bianchini has worked diligently with his staff to zero in on students not making the grade. Few of the students identified with at least two grades below a "C" had any personal connection to any of the school's staff. To reverse this trend, Bianchini initiated a series of programs, including a Navigation 101 grant, which provides individual focus on student goals and academic progress. He also worked with staff to create the school's slogan, "GFMS R.O.C.K.S" (Granite Falls Middle School Respect, Opportunity, Community, Knowledge and Service), which reflects the five core values the school seeks to portray in the community.

As a result of Bianchini's collaborative leadership efforts, office referrals were cut in half, suspension rates have steadily declined, and more students are engaged at school. The school now provides what Bianchini calls "a cohesive educational experience" for students.

"David Bianchini represents all that is best about our profession," said Dr. Richard Panagos, principal of Granite Falls Middle School. "His contributions to the overall success we are experiencing cannot be overstated. Dave has been an invaluable asset to me and has contributed greatly to the improved learning climate, staff morale and student academic performance here at Granite Falls Middle.

"Dave is truly an outstanding individual and leader and is most deserving of this award."

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## 2008 Assistant Principal of the Year/ add 1-1-1

Bianchini earned his principal's certificate from Seattle Pacific University in 2001. He holds a master's in education from City University and a bachelor of science from Seattle Pacific University. Prior to pursuing his administrative credentials, Bianchini taught physical education. Granite Falls is his first administrative position, and has served as the school's A.P. since 2003.

"When you look at successful schools, you often find successful school leaders, and Granite Falls is no exception," said Gary Kipp, executive director of AWSP. "One of our great delights as an association is shining a light on the good work being done in today's schools. And David Bianchini represents just one of many excellent administrators hard at work every day in our state. We're proud to honor David Bianchini and hope that he will continue to share his good work so that others may learn from his successes."

The National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSSP) State and National Assistant Principal of the Year Program annually honors a single winner from each of the 50 states, the District of Columbia and the Department of Defense Education Activity (DODEA) schools. From that pool of outstanding administrators, one national winner is chosen.

This year's state award is presented by the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals, a component board of the Association of Washington School Principals that focuses on middle level issues. Assistant principals at the middle and high school level alternate nominating duties for this honor each year.

All state and national winners will be honored this April at a black-tie event in Washington, D.C. During their stay in the nation's capitol, the honorees will participate in professional development and networking activities with their peers. Virco, Inc., a school furniture manufacturer, is the sole sponsor of the NASSP State and National Assistant Principal of the Year Program.

### **About the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)**

*The Association of Washington School Principals is a professional association serving principals, assistant principals and principals in training. Formed in 1972, the Association now includes more than 3,500 members from public and private elementary, middle and high schools statewide. It is governed by a board of practicing principals composed of members drawn from three grade-specific boards representing the elementary, middle and high school levels. The mission of AWSP is to support principals and assistant principals and the principalship in the education of all students. For more information on the Association, visit the AWSP Web site at [www.awsp.org](http://www.awsp.org).*