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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Ferndale Principal Named 2003 High School Principal of the Year

Leadership skills with students, staff earn David Hutchinson recognition

OLYMPIA – Ferndale High School Principal David Hutchinson has been named the 2003 High School Principal of the Year by the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals, a component board of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). Hutchinson will now serve as the state’s nomination for the National High School Principal of the Year. The announcement was made official earlier this week at the conference of the National Association of Secondary Principals (NASSP) in San Diego.

“I feel like it’s a result of working with some really great people here. I have staff that are wonderful and have helped me do some of the things we’ve needed to do here at the school,” said Hutchinson. “The kids, for me, have kept me doing what I do each day. It’s neat to be recognized by your peers for doing something you like to do. That’s the ultimate compliment.”

Hutchinson began his administrative career in 1993 as assistant principal of Ferndale High School. In 1995, he added responsibilities as assistant principal of Ferndale Alternative High School. In 1997, he was tapped to serve as principal of Ferndale High School, where he remains today.

“David is a bright, engaging school leader. An avid rock climber, David tackles the challenges of running a high school as he would any mountain: with careful skill and determination,” said Bob Mc Mullen, AWSP’s director of High School Programs. “David has been heavily engaged in education reform efforts during his tenure at Ferndale High, working aggressively to help all students achieve high standards. He’s also worked diligently to bring staff along to make this happen. He’s a one-of-a-kind leader, and he’s an excellent ambassador for his district, the state and the Association in the national level program.”

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In addition to his daily responsibilities, Hutchinson is currently gearing up to lead Ferndale's transition to a High Tech High School, made possible by a recent school community grant from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. By restructuring the size of classrooms, Hutchinson believes his school may be able to provide smaller, more personalized learning communities for freshmen and sophomores. The school is the largest high school in the county at 1,457 students.

"This is an opportunity for students to be in a small learning environment with community and staff support. It's a great chance to really connect kids with school," said Hutchinson. "We looked at all the research around what makes a difference. Connecting kids to school matters. It prevents drop outs, encourages academic excellence and keeps kids coming back to school."

Hutchinson will be officially honored at AWSP's K-12 Fall Conference next October in Spokane. He will also serve as Washington state's representative in the national award program hosted by NASSP.

Hutchinson and his wife, Cynthia Sicilia, have two sons, who attend elementary school in the Ferndale School District.

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About the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)

The Association of Washington School Principals is a professional association serving principals and assistant principals. Formed in 1972, the Association now includes more than 3,300 members from public and private elementary, middle and high schools statewide. 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.