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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Centennial Middle School Principal Honored as State Middle Level Principal of the Year

Dr. Gene Sementi gets surprise pep assembly from students, staff

SPOKANE – It was a surprise to no one but the guest of honor.

On Friday, Centennial Middle School students, staff and West Valley School District officials packed the gymnasium to surprise their principal, Dr. Gene Sementi, with the news that he had been selected as the state's Middle Level Principal of the Year for 2004. The Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) and its middle level component, the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals (AWMLP) officially announced the award at the school assembly.

"Gene Sementi is a model of the passionate principal. He is a man of character, integrity and enormous talent," said Michele Hendrickson, AWSP director of middle level programs. "Gene's passion for providing the very best educational opportunities for all students is contagious. His commitment to building a collaborative school culture where school-wide success is encouraged is a model for principals across the state," she said. "As a leader, Gene has also demonstrated his talents to help other principals and assistant principals better themselves as instructional leaders through various presentations and even one-on-one tutoring.

"We are so fortunate to have Gene Sementi working in our state, and the students, staff and district should be very proud to have Gene at work here in West Valley."

Sementi was selected from eight finalists by a panel of middle-level principals from across the state. Each year, the National Association of Secondary School Principals (NASSP) and MetLife Resources recognize outstanding secondary school leaders who have succeeded in providing high-quality learning opportunities for students. The program honors principals who have demonstrated excellence in the areas addressed by the selection criteria, including:

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Middle Level Principal of the Year/add 1-1-1

- Educational leadership – Implementation of strategies for improving teaching and learning by putting programs and improvement efforts into action;
- Problem-solving skills – Demonstration of time management skills, resolution of short- and long-term objectives and awareness of current education issues;
- Staff and self-development – Commitment to continued professional growth, teaching of others and fostering creativity; and
- Community service – Involvement in the community in the life of the school and use of community resources for students.

“Dr. Sementi is a driving force in our district, channeling his enthusiasm for learning into everything he does,” said Dr. David Smith, superintendent of the West Valley School District. “As a result of his enthusiasm, the students and staff at Centennial Middle School continue to do amazing things. I could not be more proud of the work he has done in the classroom, in the school, in our district and in our community. He is truly a role model for all of us, and is highly deserving of this outstanding honor.”

A former math and science teacher and coach, Sementi has served as a school administrator for 11 years, six as a principal. Four of those six have been spent at Centennial Middle School. Prior to joining Centennial, Sementi served as principal at Orchard Center Elementary, also in the West Valley School District.

Sementi holds a doctoral degree in education, an education specialist degree and a master’s in education administration from the University of Idaho. He also earned a bachelor’s degree in education from Eastern Washington University. He serves on the Board of Directors and the Partnership for Youth Campaign for the Spokane Valley YMCA. He is also an active member of the Association of Washington School Principals. In the fall of 2003, Sementi completed a video for the Association on principal leadership, which is available for download at <http://www.awsp.org/wpf/>.

Sementi will be officially honored at the Association’s 2004 K-12 Fall Conference this October in Wenatchee.

As the state winner, Sementi will go on to represent Washington at the national level, also sponsored by NASSP and MetLife. The national winner will be announced by NASSP later this September; state honorees will be recognized at the NASSP national convention next February in San Francisco.

For more information on the National MetLife/NASSP Principal of the Year program, visit www.principals.org.

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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 3,400 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.