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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Blue Ridge Elementary Home to State's Distinguished Elementary Principal**

*Principal Linda Boggs honored for commitment to students and staff*

**OLYMPIA** – The Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) has named Linda Boggs of Blue Ridge Elementary (Walla Walla Public Schools) the state's Distinguished Elementary Principal for 2003.

Boggs will serve as the state's nominee to the National Distinguished Principals Program, an award established by the U.S. Department of Education and the National Association of Elementary School Principals (NAESP). The award serves to honor exemplary elementary and middle school principals who set the pace, character, and quality of the education children receive during their early school years.

"We are both proud and excited to have Linda represent Washington state in this national program," said Paul Stone, president of the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington and principal of Mullan Road Elementary in Spokane. "Through various initiatives, Linda has been successful in creating a positive learning and teaching environment, one that allows both students and staff to flourish in their talents. Everyone feels welcome at Blue Ridge, and that is a sincere reflection on Linda's work as a school leader," he said. "Everyone on the selection committee was supportive of Linda's nomination. We know she will represent us well."

Blue Ridge Elementary is a diverse school with multiple challenges, including poverty and language. Nearly 90 percent of its students qualify for the state's free and reduced lunch program. Approximately 76 percent of students are English Language Learners. And yet, under Boggs' leadership, the school has continued to make academic gains, particularly on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning. In the 2000-01 school year, just 14 percent of students were passing the WASL in mathematics. By 2001-02, that figure rose to nearly 60 percent. Boggs credits increase in learning to the hard work of her staff, parents and all who enter Blue Ridge Elementary.

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## **National Distinguished Elementary Principal/ add 1-1-1**

“Visitors often comment on the warm, welcome and caring learning environment they find when they visit Blue Ridge. I think those comments affirm what we believe and practice at Blue Ridge – that all children can learn,” said Boggs. “In order for learning to take place, students must be cared for emotionally. We try to provide a safe and secure learning environment for the students, parents and staff. That is a priority for me, and it affects every decision I make as a principal,” she said. “I have to give my staff a lot of the credit. Their instructional leadership is really paying off. And together, we’ve all worked hard to create a school focused on helping children succeed.”

Among her many accomplishments as a school principal, Boggs is credited with creating specific strategies designed to help all students achieve their academic best. According to Dr. Judy Reault, assistant superintendent of Walla Walla Public Schools, Boggs is especially skilled in creatively using and accessing resources to benefit the students at her school. The Blue Ridge Summer School is one such example of Boggs pooling school and community resources to help serve students during the summer months.

“Linda is a leader among leaders. She has uncanny instincts, an amazing sense of humor and a passion for the students in her school,” wrote Reault in her recommendation of Boggs. “Our district is proud to have her on our team.”

Boggs began her professional career in the Elma School District as a first and second-grade teacher. In 1990, she moved to eastern Washington to begin teaching in the Walla Walla School District. She became assistant principal of Blue Ridge Elementary in 1991 and principal in 1995. She has been a principal in the district for 12 years, all during her tenure at Blue Ridge Elementary.

In addition to her duties as a principal, Boggs is active in various community organizations, including Camp Fire, YMCA, the Lady Elks and various Student/Teacher symposiums for Eastern Washington University. She holds a master’s in administration and a bachelor’s degree in education from Eastern Washington University.

Under the National Distinguished Principal Program, public school principals are nominated by their peers within their home states. The final selection for each state’s candidate is made by the NAESP state affiliate (AWSP in the case of Washington state). One principal is selected from each of the 50 states and the District of Columbia. The formal award ceremony for all nominees takes place in Washington D.C. each fall. Nominees participate in a series of events and activities over the course of two days, culminating in a formal awards banquet.

AWSP will formally honor Boggs in October at the Association’s Fall Conference in Spokane.

For more information on the National Distinguished Principal program, visit the Web at [www.naesp.org/ndp.htm](http://www.naesp.org/ndp.htm). To learn more about Blue Ridge Elementary, visit the district Web site at: <http://www.wwps.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 3,300 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](http://www.awsp.org).*