



## ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

1021 8th Ave. S.E. · Olympia, WA 98501-1500  
800.562.6100 · 360.357.7951 · FAX: 360.357.7966 · www.awsp.org

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 12, 2014

### CONTACT

Paula Quinn  
Director of Elementary Programs  
and Professional Development  
360.357.7951 | 800.562.6100  
paula@awsp.org

### Chris Pearson Named Washington State 2014 Elementary Principal of the Year

*Burlington-Edison School District principal commits himself to “Cada Niño” (“Each Child”)*

**OLYMPIA**—West View Elementary School Principal **Chris Pearson** was named this year’s Washington State Elementary School Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Elementary School Principals Association of Washington (ESPAW), a component of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). Pearson was one of three finalists chosen from a field of 18 statewide nominees. He learned of the news at a surprise school assembly the morning of March 3.



Pearson became principal at West View Elementary in 2011. West View is a Title I school that serves predominantly low-income Hispanic students. Over 79 percent of the school’s 364 students qualify for free or reduced-price school lunches. West View is also a “turnaround school;” in 2010 it was identified as persistently low-performing and was on the “priority” federal list. Today, it has a waiting list to enroll. In 2013, West View was honored by the Washington Education Association (WEA) as a “High-Performing Priority School” and featured in the *Seattle Times* for its reading proficiency scores, which climbed from 40.1 percent to 62.5 percent in the two years under Pearson’s leadership. The school was one of only 34 in Washington state to make double-digit growth in both math and reading scores.

For Pearson, it’s all about community. He believes that the partnership between school and community is essential for supporting the achievement of all students. Pearson has sought to cultivate this relationship in a variety of ways, including the establishment of an evening Family Center. The Family Center brings the school together with community agencies to embrace families and their needs. Parents can access technology, GED classes, and ELL services while students get tutoring support from teachers.

“The Family Center has opened doors for parents to not only learn strategies to support their child’s learning, but in many cases learning English,” explains Laurel Browning, Burlington-Edison Public Schools superintendent. “[Pearson] has promoted a climate of, ‘we can do it, no excuses.’”

“In addition to inspiring parents to become advocates for their children, Mr. Pearson is also an advocate for parents,” writes parent Joey Wasson.

School safety is also of utmost importance to Pearson. It’s his goal each day to make sure his students and staff feel safe by implementing regular safety drills, being an active presence in the school building, and greeting all students by name. He champions the phrase “*Cada Niño*,” or “*Each Child*” as the school motto.

“I have found that the most impactful way to make students feel safe is by making them feel known and loved,” says Pearson.

Pearson began his principal career at Allen Elementary (Burlington-Edison SD) career in 2007. Before that, he served for a year as Dean of Students at Burlington Edison High School. Pearson graduated in 1999 from American University in Washington, D.C., with a master’s degree in Education. He earned his

administrative certification from Western Washington University in 2009 and is currently working on his doctorate from the University of Washington.

In the spring of 2013, in partnership with Western Washington University, Pearson founded the Northwest Principal Leadership Collaborative, which provides collaboration and mentorship opportunities for principals through a summer institute and monthly site visits during the school year.

**National Distinguished Principal of the Year Program**

Pearson will be honored this fall in Washington D.C. as part of the [National Distinguished Principal of the Year program](#), which is sponsored by the [National Association of Elementary School Principals](#) in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Education and VALIC. All state winners participate in a series of events and activities over the course of two days, culminating in a formal awards banquet. There is no national winner at the elementary level.

###