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Cheney Administrator Named 2013 Assistant Principal of the Year

Ray Picicci Is a Key Driver of Success at Cheney High School

No one can accuse **Ray Picicci** of hiding in his office. In fact, Picicci, the Washington State 2013 Assistant Principal of the Year, is known for spending time everywhere but his office.

He can most often be found in the classrooms of Cheney High School observing teachers, taking pictures, then sharing instructional strategies with the rest of staff. Many of these instructional gems come via email, a favorite method of communication. The sheer number of emails earns Picicci a bit of ribbing from staff. The Assistant Principal of the Year award is bestowed by the Washington Association of Secondary School Principals (WASSP), a governing board of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). When not in observation mode, Picicci is co-teaching classes with new teachers until they feel comfortable. Or, he's stepping in for teachers who have to leave unexpectedly. Picicci also is a fixture in the hallways and cafeteria. As Cheney High School Principal **Troy Heuett** says, "He is quick to strike up a conversation with or offer an encouraging word to many students as he makes his rounds."

Picicci has served as the assistant principal at Cheney High School since 2007. He is the lead for curriculum, instruction and assessment. He has increased attention to learning targets, taken new teachers under his wing, been highly involved at the district level with literacy, math and science committees and the highly capable program. He organizes all the school's state testing, created an after-school homework center with tutors from local colleges, was the driver behind the summer school program, and has put together most of the school's intervention systems including a successful inclusion model that spans several grade levels and subjects.

"He's an accomplished assistant principal who is very much focused on empowering building staff to be instructionally intensive," said **Bob Mc Mullen**, AWSP's Director of High School Programs. "If the adults in the building are on track and fired up academically, then that translates to student achievement." Heuett, who has known and worked with Picicci for 12 years, agrees. "Ray has challenged me to always do more for our students, and I thank him for his drive, and his vision to establish confidence in all students who enter our building."

Before coming to Cheney, Picicci was a science and biology teacher at Shadle Park and North Central high schools. He earned a zoology degree from Washington State University, a biology degree from Eastern Washington University and a Master in Teaching degree from Whitworth. He earned his principal certification from WSU, and has taken coursework toward a doctoral degree in educational leadership from WSU. He is involved with extra-curricular activities at Cheney, serves on AWSP's high-school governing board, and coaches soccer, baseball and basketball in the community. He and his wife, Sarah, live in Spokane with their two young children.

Picicci will be recognized for his state award at AWSP's annual **Assistant Principals' Leadership Conference** at the Seattle Airport Marriott on Feb. 7. He will speak at a lunch in his honor. The lunch is sponsored by the [Washington State Guaranteed Education Tuition](#) program and [Jostens](#). Picicci will be honored later this year in Washington D.C. as part of the pool of candidates for the [National Assistant Principal of the Year Award](#), sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals and Virco, Inc. See the [three finalists](#) for this year's national honor.

More about Washington State Assistant Principal of the Year Award

The Washington State Assistant Principal of the Year honor alternates yearly between a middle level principal (selected by the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals) and a high school principal (selected by WASSP). This year, it's the high school's turn.

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