



Washington Schools Recognized for Outstanding Arts Education Programs

Carnation, Elk Plain, and Tacoma schools shine

SEATTLE – ArtsEd Washington (ArtsEd WA) in partnership with the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) today announced the top three Washington state school winners of the inaugural state *Schools of Excellence in Arts Education Award* - part of the national program of the *John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts Schools of Distinction in Arts Education Awards*. In addition to receiving state-level recognition, the winning schools have been submitted to The Kennedy Center to participate in their national program.

The selected Washington state public institutions were chosen for their outstanding school arts programs and recognized for making *all* components of the arts – dance, music, theater, and visual arts – an essential part of all students’ education. State-level award recipients will receive a formal recognition at their school in the coming weeks. This year’s winners include:

- **Carnation Elementary, Grades PK-5 (Carnation):** This community elementary school, located in rural King county, teaches all the arts using a theme-based structure of ‘portraits’ as a context for learning. They worked carefully over the last five years to construct and implement an *Arts School Improvement Plan* to implement systemic change in how they deliver instruction, select and train teachers, and utilize local community arts resources to enhance student learning.
- **Elk Plain School of Choice, Grades PK-6 (Spanaway):** This choice elementary school, located in the Bethel School District, employs certified teachers in all the arts disciplines. They provide a highly integrated program of learning for students with stimulating classes and hands-on experiences, which offer authentic community and cultural connections.
- **Tacoma School of the Arts, Grades 10-12 (Tacoma):** This public high-school is an urban center that offers outstanding curriculum infused with the arts and project-based lessons linking classroom activities to the world at-large. With a centralized location in downtown Tacoma, the

school is seamlessly merged with community. Their program emphasizes human expression through the visual and performing arts as central elements in academic achievement and lifelong endeavors.

“We’re extremely proud to formally acknowledge these exemplary Washington schools who have committed to ensuring the arts are part of their schools’ curriculum – in line with Washington state law requiring the arts to be taught in our public schools,” said Una McAlinden, executive director for ArtsEd Washington. “Through our partnership with AWSP, we also call attention to the important role of the schools’ principals, whose dedication to providing comprehensive arts programming - equitably to all students - is critical to the sustainable success of these schools’ programs.”

“I can’t imagine a school without the arts,” said Gary Kipp, AWSP’s Executive Director. “Nor should we. The research overwhelmingly supports what these winning schools already know—that arts education is crucial to our students’ success. Not just in school but in life.”

While not proceeding onto the national competition, ArtsEd WA and AWSP recognized two other award nominees as “highly commended” for their strong arts education programs. **Adams Elementary School**, a K-5 elementary school located in Seattle, was noted for their high levels of engagement and involvement by every adult in their school, for the high quality school art work, and for the substantive blocks of time the school allocates to arts learning. **Ferrucci Junior High**, a 7-9 grade level school located in Puyallup, was acknowledged for their excellent provision of music, theater, and visual art, and for their one-year requirement of arts learning for incoming seventh graders, which provides a strong foundation for ongoing education.

Open to all public elementary, middle, and high schools with exemplary arts education programs, nominations for the *The Schools of Excellence in Arts Education Awards* program are submitted by the school principal, a teacher, or a district administrator. The selection criteria requires schools’ arts education programs meet two or more of the following characteristics: teaching all components of the arts – dance, music, theater, and visual arts – with components integrated into other subject areas, using creative approaches to learning, providing opportunities for parental involvement, giving students opportunities for learning about other cultures, and offering connections with the community.

The awards program is offered through the Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network (KCAAEN), a coalition of thirty-three statewide, not-for profit organizations that work with The Kennedy Center. At the state level, the *Schools of Excellence in Arts Education Awards* program is administered through state art alliances or organizations. In Washington state, ArtsEd WA – the statewide arts advocacy organization, in partnership with the AWSP, joined to lead and administer this inaugural Washington state arts education awards program. For more information, including the award process and nomination requirements, and to read the full school submissions of the Washington winners, visit www.artsedwashington.org.

About ArtsEd Washington

ArtsEd Washington is a nonprofit organization devoted to advancing and increasing arts education in K-12 schools. We work to ensure that all students in Washington state have access to a complete education that includes the arts: dance, music, theatre, and visual art. We believe the only equitable way to reach every student is to teach the arts at school, during school hours, as part of their complete education. ArtsEd Washington is a member of the *Kennedy Center Alliance for Arts Education Network*. www.artsedwashington.org.

About Association for Washington School Principals

The Association of Washington School Principals is a professional association serving principals, assistant principals and principals in training. Formed in 1972, the association includes more than 3,400 members from public and private elementary, middle and high schools statewide. It is governed by a board of practicing principals drawn from the elementary, middle and high school levels.