

Raymond School District Honored by WASA

Local News

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RAYMOND, Wash. - The Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) presented a Community Leadership Award to the Raymond School District at the WASA Regional Awards Banquet in Olympia on the 23rd. Accepting the award at the banquet was Raymond Superintendent Dr. Steven Holland, and Board Chair Mark Hatfield.

The Community Leadership Award is presented to community members or groups in recognition of their contributions toward education. The award presented to the Raymond School District superintendent and board of directors for their leadership in sponsoring GRAVITY High School, a region-wide educational re-engagement program for older youth who have dropped out of school. This school year GRAVITY (GED+ Reengagement Alternative Vocational Individualized Training for Youth) has served more than 160 students from within a five county region. The high school has regional centers in Aberdeen, Chehalis, and Shelton. GRAVITY services are available to youth in the East Willapa Harbor area at the WorkSource office located in the Grays Harbor College Riverview Education Center.

The Raymond District was nominated for the award by Mike Hickman, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Service District (ESD) 113 - a regional agency that supports 44 school districts across a five county region. According to Hickman,

"For several months during the spring & summer of 2011 the ESD had been encouraging school districts to partner with us to offer a reengagement program for high school dropouts under 21 years old. School districts were reluctant to offer the GRAVITY program, primarily because there were widespread concerns about the potential negative impact these struggling learners would have on state and federal educational accountability measures (state test scores and graduation rates). Districts and schools would be penalized if their averages didn't continue to go up. We are so thankful that in late August 2011 Dr. Holland and the Raymond School District Board of Directors had the moral courage to step up and accept the responsibility of serving these vulnerable youth, especially given that most of them don't live in the Raymond area. Due to the leadership of Raymond School District, over 160 youth have had the opportunity to reconnect to public education and receive the support necessary to help them make progress toward critical learning and life goals. "

For more information regarding GRAVITY consortiums and other ESD 113 dropout reengagement services, contact Mike Hickman (mhickman@esd13.org).

For specific GRAVITY learning program services in the East Willapa Harbor area contact Sharon Madrid, (360) 875-9470).