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Contact: Jennifer Fellinger, Director of Communications  
Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)  
360.357.7951 or 360.915.4118 (mobile)  
jennifer@awsp.org

**Senator to Receive AWSP's Torch of Leadership Award**  
*School principals honor Sen. Rodney Tom for dedication to K-12 education*

**OLYMPIA**—June 3, 2009—State Senator Rodney Tom has been selected by the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP) to receive the [2009 Torch of Leadership Award](#). The award honors a state-level public servant who has demonstrated support of principals and the principalship in the education of all students.

Tom, who represents the 48th district, is being honored by AWSP for his commitment to K-12 education during the 2009 legislative session.

According to AWSP Director of Governmental Relations Jerry Bender, the senator has kept education a top priority, even when the demands of a downward economy made it difficult to do so.

“He appreciates the challenges principals face, and has championed legislation that provides what is needed to carry our students and schools forward,” explained Bender.

As a member of the Basic Education Funding Task Force, Tom helped craft ESHB 2261, which ushers in a new plan for the full funding of K-12 basic education in Washington state. He also backed bills supporting the state’s principal internship program and the Washington State Leadership Academy.

“Principals will play a vital role as we move forward with education reform within the constraints of stagnant revenues,” said Tom, upon learning of the award. “Very few areas in education give us better leverage than making sure every school has a great principal.”

“There is not a great school in Washington state that does not also have a great principal; the two go hand-in-hand,” he added.

School building administrators in the 48th district have noticed Tom’s hard work. Paul Luczak, principal of Juanita Elementary (Lake Washington School District), remarked, “Senator Tom is a bipartisan legislator who truly understands educational issues and has worked tirelessly for education reform.”

Tom just completed his first term in the Senate after serving two terms in the House. He is the vice chair for the operating budget on the Ways and Means Committee and also serves on the Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee and the Judiciary Committee.

The senator will be honored with a formal recognition and award presentation at AWSP's [2009 Principals' Conference](#), Oct. 18–20, in Yakima.

The Torch of Leadership Award is administered by AWSP. Nominations for the award are submitted by members of AWSP's [Legislation Committee](#), and final selection is made by a panel of staff and committee members.

***About the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP)***

*The Association of Washington School Principals is a professional association serving principals, assistant principals and principals in training. Formed in 1972, the Association now 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 composed of members drawn from three grade-specific boards representing the elementary, middle and high school levels. 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).*

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