



## ASSOCIATION OF WASHINGTON SCHOOL PRINCIPALS

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### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 31, 2015

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### **Anissa Bereano Named Washington State 2015 Middle Level Principal of the Year**

*Highland Middle School principal raises student achievement in Bellevue through shared leadership, building capacity, and a collective vision*

**OLYMPIA**— Highland Middle School Principal Anissa Bereano was named this year's Washington State Middle Level Principal of the Year by a panel of principals representing the Association of Washington Middle Level Principals, a component of the Association of Washington School Principals (AWSP). She was one of nine nominees from across the state.

Bereano has been principal at Highland, a Title I school in the Bellevue School District supporting a racially and economically diverse student population, since 2008. As principal, Bereano has worked with staff to build a culture of universal achievement, resulting in significant academic gains for students and narrowing - and in some cases closing - the achievement gap for Highland's students of color. In addition to the academic gains, the school has been able to eliminate detentions and has seen a 71 percent reduction in suspensions.



When she arrived at Highland, Bereano was the third principal in three years, the school was in its first year of AYP sanctions, and staff morale and community pride in the school were low. At the time, 56 percent of the students passed the math MSP and 67 percent passed in reading. On the 2014 MSP, the passage rate for math was 70 percent and reading was 82 percent. Eighth grade Hispanic students were the highest performing subgroup on the reading MSP with a 92 percent passage rate. In addition, Highland's organizational health data is strong because of high staff interdependence, collegiality, and shared leadership.

"There was no quick fix for Highland's improvement, but through shared leadership, building capacity, and a collective vision, we have been able to make great strides," Bereano said. "While we have not yet achieved our ultimate goal, the Highland staff knows it's possible and we are more committed than ever."

"She is a phenomenal instructional leader who is innovative, collaborative, and committed," Dr. Patty Siegwarth, Executive Director of Bellevue Schools, said about Bereano. "Her interpersonal skills are excellent. She communicates her genuine care for students and adults, while maintaining high expectations for behavior and performance."

Highland Middle School was named a School of Distinction in 2014, and AVID School of Distinction in 2013 and 2014, and won an Academic Achievement Award in 2010 for overall excellence and again in 2012 for science.

Bereano has worked as an educator in the Bellevue School District for 21 years and achieved her National Board Certification in 2002. Her first job in administration was July 2004, when she was the assistant principal at Tyee Middle School. Bereano moved to Eastgate Elementary in 2005 before taking the reins at Highland Middle School in 2008. She graduated from the University of Washington in 1992 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Political Science, earned her Master's Degree in Human Development in 2001 from Pacific Oaks College, and attained her administrative certification from the University of Washington in 2004.

### **National Distinguished Principal of the Year Program**

Bereano now becomes eligible for the 2015 NASSP National Principal of the Year award. The program, sponsored by the National Association of Secondary School Principals, annually recognizes outstanding middle level and high school principals. From the state winners, six finalists will compete for the award in Washington, D.C., later this year. For more information, visit [www.nassp.org](http://www.nassp.org).

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