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Sumner-Bonney Lake Superintendent Named Washington State Superintendent of the Year

*Every student graduating with a promising future is the top priority for
Superintendent Laurie Dent*

OLYMPIA (Nov. 17, 2023) — Dr. Laurie Dent, Superintendent of Sumner-Bonney Lake School District, was named 2024 Superintendent of the Year on Friday by the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA). The announcement was made during WASA’s Fall Superintendent Component meeting in Bellevue.

The award is designed to recognize the outstanding leadership of active, front-line superintendents and pay tribute to those who lead Washington’s public schools.

"Dr. Dent is to be commended for spearheading a transformative mission during her tenure as superintendent, turning graduation rate aspirations into concrete achievements in the Sumner-Bonney Lake School District," said WASA Executive Director Joel Aune. "The district's '100% Graduation Campaign' ignited a collective commitment, resulting in an impressive 92.1% graduation rate in 2023—an 8.1% surge since 2016, including the significant closure of the graduation gap for Hispanic/Latino students."

Aune added, "Dr. Dent has advocated for and led the implementation of competency-based assessments, a focus on personalized learning, and inclusive communication in her district, effectively advancing educational equity in Sumner-Bonney Lake. Despite the immense challenges of the past three years, Dr. Dent has exhibited steadfast leadership, transparency, and adaptability."

“We congratulate Laurie and the entire Sumner-Bonney Lake school community on this well-deserved honor,” said Aune.

Dent conveyed her gratitude for this acknowledgment, not just on her behalf but also on behalf of her outstanding team.

"The honor of being named Superintendent of the Year belongs to my exceptional team, the true architects of our success. Together, we have transformed schools, served our community with compassion, and led with a relentless pursuit of fulfilling our promise to know, value, and support every student," she said, "I'm proud to share this honor with a team that embodies the essence of collaborative excellence."

Dent and her team have fostered open communication, collaborative decision-making, and a shared commitment to ethical leadership.

The Sumner-Bonney Lake School District has 16 schools, with 10,618 students in grades K-12, and employs 1,304 certificated and classified staff.

Dent has been an employee of the district for 26 years. She has held various positions in the district prior to assuming the role of superintendent in 2016, including assistant superintendent of instructional services; chief academic officer; one year as assistant principal and eight years as co-principal at Mountain View Middle School; and three years as principal at Liberty Ridge Elementary. Dent was also a sixth-grade teacher in the district.

Dent earned her doctorate from Northwest Nazarene University in spring 2018 and her Superintendent Certification in 2016 from Washington State University. She earned a Bachelor of Arts degree from Pacific Lutheran University, a Master of Education in Special Education from Pacific Lutheran University, a Master of Business Administration from the University of Phoenix, and an Administrative Certification from the University of Washington.

In addition to her educational experience, Dent has held membership or served in several distinguished organizations, including the WASA Board of Directors, American Association of School Administrators, Washington State School Directors' Association, Washington Association of Business Officials, Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development, National Superintendent's Roundtable, National School Public Relations Association, and the National Honor Society.

Dent has received several accolades, including the 2021 WASA Award of Merit, the 2020 NSPRA Superintendents to Watch recognition, and the Distinguished Elementary Principal of the Year in the East Pierce Region in June 2013.

As the state's Superintendent of the Year, Dent will be a candidate for the 2024 American Association of School Administrators National Superintendent of the Year Award. The national award will be announced in February during the AASA National Conference on Education in San Diego.

In conjunction with the award, Washington's Superintendent of the Year will receive a \$1,000 check from D.A. Davidson & Company to use toward a school or educational program of their choice.

Recent WASA Superintendent of the Year include:

- 2023: Adam Swinyard, Spokane SD
- 2022: Susan Enfield, Highline SD
- 2021: Michelle Reid, Northshore SD (Also named National Superintendent of the Year)
- 2020: Greg Baker, Bellingham PS
- 2019: Michael Nelson, Enumclaw SD

[Click here](#) for a complete list of Washington state's Superintendents of the Year.



Laurie Dent, Washington Superintendent of the Year 2024

About the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)

WASA (www.wasa-oly.org) is a non-profit organization committed to the development of quality education through professional leadership. Members benefit from a supportive community of professional leaders working to provide insightful, valuable training support, and

resources. WASA also strives to sustain a positive impact on legislative and community leaders. Membership is open to education administrators in Washington state.

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