



**CHILDREN'S ALLIANCE**

*A Voice for Washington's Children, Youth & Families*

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## **SCHOOLS WIN CASH FOR HELPING STUDENTS “FUEL UP FIRST”**

State schools superintendent Dorn honors local districts

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

THURS., MARCH 26—Eight school districts across Washington state have earned honors for serving more students the first meal of the day: breakfast.

State Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn, the Washington State Dairy Council, and the non-profit advocacy group for kids the Children's Alliance are recognizing the school districts with gold, silver and bronze awards and cash prizes of \$500-\$1,500. The Dairy Council provided funds for the awards, and for colorful award banners to hang in local schools.

The eight recognized districts stretch from the town of Newport, in the northeast corner of the state, to Satsop, just 40 miles from the Pacific Ocean. In the 2012-2013 school year, each district served school breakfasts to 29 to 43 percent more students than in 2011-2012.

“Our Washington constitution says that the paramount duty of this state is to educate young people,” Dorn says. “And you cannot educate the next generation if they're hungry.”

“No child should go hungry in Washington,” says Linda Stone, food policy director at the Children's Alliance. “We have led the country in creating innovative ways to solve childhood hunger. These standout districts' progress shows that we can do better.”

School breakfast varies across the state. Newport School District students receive free breakfasts, and in the elementary school, breakfast is provided in the classroom after the school bell rings. Serving breakfast after the bell increases participation because it reduces barriers like late buses or crowded lunchrooms. Teachers like it because more kids start the day with good nutrition, ready to learn.

The eight districts recognized are:

- Newport, about 50 miles north of Spokane;
- Dixie, 15 miles east of Walla Walla;

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- Pomeroy, 30 miles west of Clarkston;
- Easton, 40 miles west of Ellensburg;
- Skamania, in the Columbia Gorge town of Stevenson, 35 miles east of Vancouver;
- Satsop, 17 miles east of Aberdeen in southwest Washington;
- Mary M. Knight, in the town of Elma, just east of Satsop;
- Quilcene, on the east side of the Olympic Peninsula, 25 miles south of Port Townsend.

“Educators know that hunger disrupts learning and stifles academic performance,” Stone said. “School meals are a crucial part of the state’s food security network.”

One in four children is growing up in homes where there isn’t enough food. And while most low-income students are served lunch, only 43 percent are served breakfast. On a national level, Latino and African American households are 60-70 percent more likely to experience hunger than the national average, according to the Children’s Alliance 2013 report, [Hungry in Washington](#). Advocates for hungry kids believe we can do better.

During the 2014 state legislative session, Rep. Zack Hudgins (D-Seattle) and Sen. Steve Litzow (R-Mercer Island) sponsored the Breakfast After the Bell Act, to spur more kids to get a great start to the school day. The bill did not become law this year, but the Children’s Alliance will continue to work with allies and lawmakers to increase school breakfast participation in Washington.

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*The Children’s Alliance ([www.childrensalliance.org](http://www.childrensalliance.org)) is a statewide public policy advocacy organization that works at the state and federal level to ensure that all children have what they need to thrive.*