



Healthy School Award: A Washington State Recognition Award

Recognizing educator(s) who contribute to providing a healthy school where students learn about and practice a healthy lifestyle.

Research confirms that students do better in school when they are emotionally and physically healthy. They miss fewer classes, are less likely to engage in risky or antisocial behavior, concentrate more, and achieve higher test scores.

Martin Luther King Elementary School, Vancouver Public Schools Janell Ephraim, Principal

Martin Luther King Elementary is a culturally and socioeconomically diverse school in the Vancouver Public Schools. There are more than six different languages spoken at King, and 94% of the student body qualify for free and reduced lunch.

The staff at Martin Luther King Elementary strives to provide a well-rounded educational experience for their students encompassing an emphasis on academics, social skills and healthy lifestyles. Given the diverse backgrounds represented, the students and staff have worked strategically to increase healthy lifestyle choices in their community. King has over 30 community partnerships in place that support healthy lifestyle choices for their families. In addition to these partnerships, King Elementary has implemented an Early Learning Preschool Program and family engagement program. The systems and financial support offered by the district and federal grants have significantly increased their ability to respond to the needs of students related to food, basic supplies, hygiene, community outreach and early learning opportunities.

Two primary partnerships that promote healthy living at King Elementary are with Share House Vancouver, an organization which provides over 50 food bags each week to their families, and the Washington State University Extension Services Food Nutrition Program, which provides a structured healthy living curriculum and snacks to all their students throughout the year. These programs, as well as all other community partnerships, serve as essential foundations for readiness and success in school. The King community continues to investigate ways to increase student and family success.