



## **2010 STATE RECOGNITION AWARDS**

**'Educating the Whole Child' Award  
Westside Recipient  
*Mary Wilson, Principal  
Manitou Park Elementary School  
Tacoma Public Schools***

Manitou Park Elementary School used to be seen as one of the most violent and academically challenged in the Tacoma School District. Mary Wilson became the Principal in 2006. Historically, many students entered Manitou Park unprepared to learn and struggling with physical and emotional issues. Realizing that something needed to be done to impact students and learning, a series of events and connections with OSPI and other external partners led Mary to begin implementation of a Compassionate Schools framework at Manitou Park. Professional development for school staff focused on understanding characteristics of traumatized children and issues related to cultural competency. From that foundation, classroom strategies and school-wide efforts to address social skills, self-regulation, behavior modification, and other barriers to learning were addressed. School, family, and outside agencies and experts were drawn into the process to address all aspects related to student success.

The *BERC Group School and Classroom Practices Study* conducted in autumn 2009 found that “over the past four years since the current principal arrived at the school, administrators and staff have been working to address safety issues, discipline issues, staff issues, parent involvement issues and focus on improving learning in reading, writing and particularly math.”

It is clear that Mary Wilson has supported a nurturing learning environment at the school for both staff and students, strong relationships among staff, and strong parent and family involvement. These capable and knowledgeable administrators work well together and set high standards for the staff and students both academically and behaviorally that will continue to move the school forward.