



## 2011 STATE RECOGNITION AWARDS

### INDIVIDUAL AWARD #1

for contributing to a significant and positive impact on student learning

### **Pamela Schaaf**

Instructional Coach, Valhalla Elementary School  
Federal Way Public Schools

Every successful coach realizes the importance of building trusting relationships with colleagues. Pam understands how critical it is to not only develop these relationships herself, but also to encourage and build a culture of trust and rapport among all teachers. Pam has worked to implement a *Professional Learning Community* model where teachers come together for 40 minutes during the work day once every 6 days. This opportunity to provide job-embedded professional development as part of the contracted day enables teachers to meet together with their grade level colleagues and learn alongside one another. Pam developed protocols for these meetings to ensure highly engaging, productive meetings. Pam's work as a skilled coach is recognized in other districts around the nation as well as in Diane Sweeney's new book, *Student-Centered Coaching*, which includes a section highlighting the coaching model at Valhalla and an excerpt written by Pam.

Valhalla Elementary houses a diverse community of students with a high ELL population, high rate of mobility, and a unique program for students with behavior needs. Pam works tirelessly to help teachers design, use and analyze assessments to personalize instruction. Data walls for reading, math, and language proficiency have been designed to monitor each student's progress. Every 6-8 weeks teachers gather around the data displays to discuss student progress and ways to differentiate instruction to better meet each student's needs.

When the Federal Way administration decided to implement instructional coaching district-wide for schools receiving Title I and LAP funding, Pam became an invaluable resource. She provided monthly workshops for the elementary instructional coaches. Her thoughtful and responsive interactions with staff both during formal presentations and follow-up conversations were critical to the success of the program.

Ms. Schaff is truly an innovative and passionate educator. Through her passion for reaching all students, she strives for excellence herself each and every day. Her exemplary leadership in teaching and learning is evident in each classroom and with each teacher she supports.