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PRESS RELEASE

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WestSide High School to receive the Challenged Students Award from Washington State ASCD

Olympia, WA May, 2016 – The Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (WSASCD) has announced that WestSide High School will receive a Whole Child award called the 'Challenged Students Award' for 2016. The Challenged Students Award is intended to recognize educators who contribute to providing a school where students are challenged academically with a well-balanced curriculum.

WestSide High School is an alternative high school where students are challenged academically and prepared for success outside of school. The school climate and culture is one that is warm and accepting and based on relationships built with the students. The staff has spent the past five years learning and growing as a staff in understanding Trauma Sensitive School Practices, Adverse Childhood Experiences, Resiliency, and PBIS. They focus on understanding why students act and react the way they do by studying brain research and then knowing how to prevent, intervene, and respond using the research based practices built in to (PBIS) so students can find success academically.

WestSide has added an advisory to help students have stronger connections with the staff and further prepare them for post-secondary education. Each student is met where they are academically and given the tools to advance to the next level at their own pace in each content area. Their contract-based educational practices allow teachers to work one on one with students on a daily basis to help build their skills. Each student at WestSide takes one of two classes (Foundations or Career Readiness) that build an awareness of themselves as individuals and prepares them for the world outside of public education. They also offer many experiential courses such as their No Child Left Inside program that focuses on giving students an "in the field" look at the sciences. They also offer individualized project-based STEM contracts where students have worked on creating combustible engines and under-water breathing apparatuses. Most recently, the students created a prosthetic hand through 3-D printing that was given to a triple amputee to regain the use of his right hand.

WestSide High School offers a variety of programs and practices that can be used to help high functioning students and credit deficient students at the same time. Since their program offers contract based education as an instructional practice, high functioning students often take advantage of this by moving through the curriculum at an accelerated rate which, at times, allows them to graduate early. They have also developed curriculum that challenges students of all levels enabling teachers to adapt to the students' needs academically at an increased level, as well as implementing a variety of pre-diagnostics to ensure proper placement in English Language Arts and mathematics.

While attending WestSide, teachers have seen students' attitudes slowly change as they begin to engage in their education and most, eventually, earn a diploma. WestSide High School truly supports the whole child and advocates that all students can learn.

Founded in 1956, the Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development (ASCD) is a community of all educators committed to promoting promising practices to ensure ALL students are safe, healthy, engaged, supported and challenged.

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