



## Selected Recent Achievements 2008-2020

- Launched in 2008 and updated in 2014, the Design II Strategic Plan for Vancouver Public Schools has led to improvements in instructional quality across the system, expansion of educational program choices in grades K-12, structured and focused time for teacher collaboration, new applications of technology to increase student learning and engagement, and partnerships that mobilize resources and remove barriers to learning.
- In mid-March 2020, VPS along with all other districts in the state were confronted with an unprecedented emergency closure caused by the Covid-19 pandemic. The crisis required VPS to act quickly to meet the food and child care needs of children and families during Governor Jay Inslee's "Stay Home, Stay Healthy" order. In addition, the district scaled remote learning for all students K-12, an enormously complex effort completed in the span of roughly three weeks. Among other steps, the pivot to remote learning required the distribution of an additional 7,500 digital devices and 350 wi-fi hotspots for families and the creation of 35 digital learning hubs for schools.
- Superintendent Steve Webb and VPS received the 2020 Effie H. Jones Humanitarian Award from the American Association of School Administrators. The award recognizes champions of equity, excellence and innovation in education who have demonstrated a personal commitment to diversifying the profession with high-quality leaders.
- The Governance Core, a book by Michael Fullan and Davis Campbell, referenced VPS as illustrative of "a governance system, school board and superintendent working together as a cohesive, unified team with a common vision driven by a shared moral imperative." The book was featured in the April 2020 issue of *School Administrator* magazine.
- The Washington Association of School Administrators named Superintendent Steve Webb the 2016 State Superintendent of the Year for outstanding leadership. He also was chosen from among 49 state winners as one of four finalists for the title of 2016 National Superintendent of the Year. The American Association of School Administrators, the top U.S. professional association for school system leaders, selected the finalists and awarded the national title.
  - As a 2016 National Superintendent of the Year Finalist, Webb was a guest of President Barack Obama at the White House in May 2016. He was invited to the "Great Educators Event" to honor the National Teacher of the Year, state teachers of the year and other distinguished educators.
- The Washington State School Directors' Association honored the VPS Board of Directors as a Board of Distinction for five consecutive years, which earned the board a Special Merit Award in 2013. In 2010 and 2011, Vancouver's board was WSSDA's Board of the year for twice receiving the highest score among the Boards of Distinction.

- The Washington Association of School Administrators selected two VPS leaders Superintendent Steve Webb (2011) and Chief of Staff Tom Hagley (2016) to receive the Robert J. Handy Most Effective Administrator Award in the large districts category.

### **Community Schools**

- The Vancouver community has sustained its support for VPS in good and bad economic times.
  - After the state legislature raised the cap on local levies from \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed property value to \$2.50 per \$1,000, VPS voters in February 2020 approved a first-ever supplemental levy to avoid \$10 million in budget cuts that would have been necessary otherwise. The supplemental levy passed at 60.51 percent.
  - In February 2019, despite statewide public concern about property taxes related to the transition to a new funding system for K-12 schools, 64.5 percent of voters approved VPS' four-year replacement levy for education and operations. They also approved a six-year replacement levy for technology by 62.7 percent.
  - Following an 18-month public engagement process, 69.82 percent of voters authorized a \$458 million bond measure in February 2017 to replace seven aging schools, build three new schools and improve all other facilities in the district. At the time, it was the largest bond measure in Southwest Washington history which, when combined with a class-size reduction grant and other financial support from the state, will enable approximately \$563 million in construction to address facility needs.
  - The district's history of continuous levy support goes back 56 years.
- In February 2020, School CEO magazine published a feature article on the process used by VPS to engage the community and build public confidence leading up to the passage of a \$458 million bond election in February 2017. Superintendent Steve Webb and Chief of Staff Tom Hagley were interviewed for the article.
- The National School Public Relations Association named Communication Specialist Amanda Richter to its fourth class of "35 Under 35" emerging leaders in 2018 for professional accomplishments and career growth potential.
- Superintendent Steve Webb received the 2018 Bob Grossman Leadership in School Communications Award from the National School Public Relations Association. This award annually honors a superintendent of schools or CEO of an education agency for outstanding leadership in school public relations and communication.
- The Foundation for Vancouver Public Schools received more than \$280,000 from staff, students and iQ Credit Union in the 2019 fall fundraising campaign. For the foundation's spring 2020 luncheon, conducted as a virtual event due to the COVID-19 emergency closure, patrons contributed approximately \$250,000, which included an \$80,000 gift from Slumberkins and LSW Architects. Proceeds from past luncheons have supported basic needs assistance, mentoring and enrichment in concert with the district's community schools initiative.
- Since 2017, an anonymous patron has donated and pledged a total of \$541,300 to the Foundation for Vancouver Public Schools to support early learning programs and the principal's discretionary fund.

- The Family-Community Resource Centers, which help remove barriers to learning in 18 schools serving high concentrations of poverty-affected students, have been lauded at the local, state and national levels. Two mobile FCRCs serve the schools without site-based centers. Annually, the FCRCs have averaged approximately \$7 million in community resources, public services, cash and in-kind donations to address non-academic barriers to student success. The centers provided food, housing, transportation, clothing and hygiene items, medical and mental health services, dental and vision care, early learning opportunities and out-of-school time activities.
  - Superintendent Steve Webb and Chief of Staff Tom Hagley wrote a feature article, “Cultivating Community Schools,” for the August 2019 issue of *School Administrator* magazine, which is published by the American Association of School Administrators. The article described not only how VPS scaled up FCRCs but also how the district became a lighthouse for other communities in the state and nation seeking to establish community schools.
  - The FCRCs and related Vancouver school-community partnerships were featured prominently in Broader, Bolder, Better: How Schools and Communities Help Students Overcome the Disadvantages of Poverty by Elaine Weiss and Paul Reville (Harvard Education Press, 2019).
  - In 2019, the Digital Promise League of Innovative Schools featured the FCRCs in one of its first Innovation Portfolios.
  - To support the development of a three-year prenatal-third grade blueprint for learning, VPS was selected in 2018 to receive a planning grant of \$146,177 from the Aligned Network Partners—StriveTogether, Coalition for Community Schools and Communities in Schools. Funded by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative and the Ford Foundation, VPS’ proposal was one of 10 successful student-centered learning plans chosen out of 86 proposals received nationwide.
  - In October 2017, the *American School Board Journal* featured Vancouver’s network of FCRCs in a special multimedia issue entitled, “No Ordinary Day.” which highlighted lighthouse programs in six innovative school districts.
  - VPS’ mobile FCRC received a 2017 Magna Award Grand Prize (large districts category) from the National School Boards Association.
  - Superintendent Steve Webb, Chief of Staff Tom Hagley and Executive Director of School Support Tamara Shoup were featured speakers at the *Education Week 2017 Leaders to Learn From* live event in Washington, D.C., in March 2017.
  - After a yearlong selection process, *Education Week* named Superintendent Steve Webb and Chief of Staff Tom Hagley two of 13 U.S. Leaders to Learn From in 2016. They were recognized for visionary leadership in establishing a network of FCRCs, supporting the needs of the whole child, developing partnerships and promoting the community schools framework inside and beyond VPS. *Education Week* is America’s newspaper and website of record for K-12 schools. The annual Leaders to Learn From report “shines a light on forward-thinking district leaders who seize on good ideas and execute them well in their school systems.” Nominated by Marty Blank, then-executive director of the national Coalition for Community Schools, Webb and Hagley were selected from nearly 800 candidates.

- Researchers from the Center for Health and Health Care in Schools at George Washington University visited VPS and published a case study on the FCRCs and the Strengthening Neighborhoods Collaborative, a cross-sector partnerships action team convened by the district.
- Superintendent Steve Webb received the 2016 Community Schools Superintendent Leadership Award from the national Coalition for Community Schools, Institute for Educational Leadership and American Association of School Administrators.
- The Economic Policy Institute's *Broader, Bolder Approach to Education*, recognized the FCRCs as a national best practice model for community schools in a case study, which was published in February 2016.
- A 2015 case study by the Urban Institute featured Vancouver as one of three U.S. cities pairing housing solutions with strategies for academic success as a way to help low-income families disrupt the cycle of intergenerational poverty. Through a small pilot program, families who met eligibility requirements received housing vouchers. In exchange, they agreed to work with the Vancouver Housing Authority (VHA) on self-sufficiency and with VPS staff on attendance and school-engagement plans for their children. Families were referred to the program through the FCRCs. The VHA board subsequently approved a plan to expand the program in Vancouver and surrounding districts.
- Vancouver Public Schools was one of nearly 50 school districts from across the U.S. and one of just four Washington state districts honored with an inaugural District of Distinction award from *District Administration* magazine in November 2014. VPS' network of FCRCs was recognized in the public/private partnerships category.
- The *American School Board Journal* has given three Magna Awards to VPS for successes related to developing, expanding and promoting community schools. The GoReady: Back-to-School Readiness Festival was one of five first-place Magna Award winners for 2015. The Kindergarten Jump Start program was one of 15 first-place Magna Award winners for 2014. And the Family-Community Resource Centers received an honorable mention Magna Award in 2011.
- Tom Hagley, chief of staff, received the "2014 Community Champion Award" from the Greater Vancouver Chamber of Commerce for his leadership in scaling the FCRC network and building public support for a technology levy.
- The Data Quality Campaign, an advocacy group focused on the use of high-quality data to improve student achievement, and the OMG Center for Collaborative Learning (now rebranded as Equal Measure), a social-sector advisory organization, featured VPS Family-Community Resource Centers as a success story in its April 2014 blog. The success story described the strategic use of data in the district's FCRCs, school-based centers promoting family engagement and providing wrap-around services and support.
- VPS received a Clark County Public Health Community Award for the FCRCs in 2013.
- In the spring of 2012, Superintendent Steve Webb received the Student Achievement Award from WASA Region 112 for his leadership in creating an Opportunity Zone to mobilize district and community resources in support of poverty-affected schools.

- *Executive Educator* magazine featured the FCRCs in its July 2011 issue.
- In 2014, the National School Public Relations Association published a book for superintendents entitled, Making Communication Work for You and Your Schools, with a chapter by Tom Hagley, chief of staff, on the effective involvement of stakeholders in a district's strategic planning process, spotlighting the VPS community engagement model.
- Steve Webb, superintendent, and Tom Hagley, then-executive director of community and government relations, received the 2011 Leadership Through Communication Award given by the American Association of School Administrators, the National School Public Relations Association, and Blackboard Connect. Open to all districts in the U.S. and Canada, this highly competitive award program recognizes "outstanding superintendents and communication professionals" for providing exemplary leadership in communication and public engagement. A panel of judges visited VPS to interview approximately two-dozen internal and external stakeholders before making the selection.
- The Learning First Alliance, a national partnership of 16 education associations with more than 10 million members, featured VPS in its Public School Success Stories. In 2010 VPS identified an "Opportunity Zone" with elementary, middle and high schools serving large concentrations of students affected by poverty and mobility. Additional district and community resources were channeled to the Opportunity Zone schools to help remove barriers to learning. Those schools have realized significant gains in student achievement as result of the district's targeted effort:
  - From 2008-09 through 2010-11, all grade levels in Discovery and Jason Lee (designated Tier II persistently low achieving schools according to federal rules) showed increases in the percent of students meeting state standards in both reading and math. As examples, the percentage of Jason Lee 8<sup>th</sup> graders meeting standard in reading increased from 56.7 percent to 69.9 percent (13.2 percentage point increase), while the number of 8<sup>th</sup> graders meeting standard in math increased from 33.3 percent to 46.7 percent (13.4 percentage point increase). At Discovery, the percentage of 6<sup>th</sup> graders meeting standard in math increased from 28.5 percent to 57.4 percent (28.9 percentage point increase), while the percentage of 7<sup>th</sup> graders meeting standard in math increased from 30.6 percent to 48.1 percent (17.5 percentage point increase).
  - Measures of Academic Progress results showed that between 2008-09 and 2010-11, percentages of students meeting growth targets (calculated by NW Evaluation Association) in math increased across both Opportunity Zone and non-Opportunity Zone schools, with Opportunity Zone schools out-performing non-Opportunity Zone schools for the first time in 2010-11 (57 percent compared with 55 percent)—the gap in this area had closed. In reading, both Opportunity Zone and non-Opportunity Zone schools showed growth, with the gap closed by 2010-11 (52 percent for both sets of schools).

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Flexible Learning Environments**

- Vancouver Public Schools (VPS) is a charter member of the League of Innovative Schools. Announced at a White House event in September 2011, the league is an alliance of 114 school districts and education agencies in 34 states committed to working with entrepreneurs and researchers to make dramatic gains in student achievement. The league operates in partnership with Digital Promise, the national center created by Congress to advance breakthroughs in education with technology, and the U.S. Department of Education. Digital Promise was launched as part of the Obama administration's broader agenda to spur innovation in education and prepare our students – and our country – for the challenges of a 21<sup>st</sup> century economy. Superintendent Steve Webb chairs the Superintendents' Advisory Council.

- In 2019, the league published a series of Innovation Portfolios online to promote the sharing of educational best practices nationwide. One of the first portfolios featured the Family-Community Resource Centers initiative and other strategic efforts in Vancouver to improve equity.
- VPS co-hosted the league's spring meeting April 19-21, 2015. Participants visited several Vancouver school sites to see exemplary applications of technology for teaching and learning.
- In 2014, the league featured VPS in a case study on the leadership role of teacher-librarians in the digital age.
- A February 2020 article in District Administration magazine spotlighted VPS as a district using computer science and STEM activities to improve learning for students with special needs.
- The Learning Counsel awarded VPS a 2019 Top 10 Digital District - EduJedi Honorable Mention Rank based on survey results from 462 schools and districts.
- In 2019 the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development recognized VPS for excellence in professional learning. As part of the weLearn 1:1 initiative, digital learning coaches have delivered thousands of hours of professional development and support. They have expanded delivery methods to online, hybrid (seat time and online), conference, summit, embedded coaching, small cohorts and school based-offerings aligned with improvement plans. Zach Desjarlais, director of instructional technology, accepted the award on behalf of VPS.
- The Consortium for School Networking selected VPS for its 2019 Community Leadership Award for Digital Equity, defined as access to devices and high-speed internet and the promotion of digital leadership. VPS was the third recipient of the award and the first recipient from Washington state.
- *eSchool News* chose VPS for a 2019 Distinguished Innovator Award for embracing personalized learning, closing equity and opportunity gaps and using groundbreaking strategies to improve education in every classroom.
- In January 2019, *Education Dive* published an article by Chief Digital Officer Christina Iremonger entitled, "Six Tips for Implementing an Effective Online Student Safety Program."
- VPS was a 2018 TechXcellence honoree in *District Administration* magazine for its Future Ready Administrators initiative, which provides professional development in applications of technology for cadres of school and central office leaders.
- For 2017-18, VPS was awarded a Sprint ConnectED grant to provide equitable internet access at home or away from school for students whose family otherwise might be unable to afford this service.
- The Consortium for School Networking (CoSN) selected Eddie Sawyer, innovative technology solutions coordinator, as one of five 2018 NextGeneration Leaders. Zach Desjarlais, manager of instructional technology, was one of five 2017 NextGeneration Leaders.
- In December 2017, *District Administration* chose VPS for its Schools of TechXcellence national recognition for its development and implementation of the Hour of Creation program.

- *District Administration* named VPS a 2017 District of Distinction for its professional development initiative to prepare Future Ready Administrators.
- For efforts to leverage digital tools effectively in the classroom, Getting Smart, a website promoting innovative educational practices, named VPS one of 30 districts worth visiting in 2017. Vancouver iTech Preparatory also was named one of 100 middle and high schools to visit. Previously, the website also recognized VPS as a leader in piloting comprehensive open resources into the math curriculum.
- The Learning Counsel, a research institute, chose VPS from more than 900 entries as a 2016 Top Digital District and honored the district with a Digital Curriculum Strategy Award.
- The White House Office of Science and Technology Policy invited Superintendent Steve Webb to participate in an October 2016 symposium on the future of education research and development and digital learning.
- In February 2016, VPS was one of 25 districts in the nation commended by the White House for its commitment to computer science education. The commendation came in support of a presidential initiative to expand computer science curricula for K-12 students across the country.
- As part of the ConnectED Future Ready initiative, the U.S. Department of Education selected VPS in 2015 to tell its digital transformation story for a series of 50 videos about technology in education. From a field of 400 applicants, the DOE selected just eight districts for the Future Ready Leaders project, designed to benefit school leaders who are beginning their own digital transformations. Video and research teams visited Hough Elementary School, Discovery and McLoughlin middle schools, and the grades 6-8 campus of Vancouver iTech Preparatory to capture the Vancouver story.
  - In February 2015, Vancouver was the site of a ConnectED Future Ready Regional Summit, one of 12 in the country designed to help district leaders improve teaching and learning through effective use of technology. The U.S. Department of Education and the Alliance for Excellent Education were co-hosts with VPS.
  - The White House selected VPS Superintendent Steve Webb as one of 100 school district leaders in the country to participate in the U.S. Department of Education's "ConnectED to the Future" summit meeting on November 19, 2014.
- In 2015, the American Association of School Administrators chose VPS as one of approximately 20 districts to join a Digital Consortium. Superintendent Steve Webb serves on the Superintendents' Advisory Council.
- Two national publications in 2015 highlighted the changing role of teacher-librarians as digital transformation leaders in VPS and elsewhere in the country.
  - The May 2015 issue of AASA's *School Administrator* magazine featured a cover story written by VPS Superintendent Steve Webb and then-Chief Digital Officer Mark Ray entitled, "Teacher Librarians: Mavens in a Digital Age."
  - *Education Week* published an article, "Librarians Adopt New Role: Guiding Blended Learning, District Tech Efforts" in its April 15, 2015 issue.

- The National School Boards Association’s Technology Leadership Network named Mark Ray, then-chief digital officer, as a 2015 “20 to Watch” honoree. The honor recognizes education leaders from across the country for their work in exploring and embracing innovative technology solutions that contribute to high-quality instruction and support more personalized learning experiences for students.
- For driving a series of systemic advancements to prepare VPS for a digital transformation through the use of 1:1 technology, *eSchool News* presented Superintendent Steve Webb with a Tech-Savvy Superintendent Award. He was one of eight superintendents to earn the honor in 2014. In March 2015, *eSchool News* featured Webb and VPS in an article entitled, “A One-to-one Program Done Slowly—and Right.”
- In October 2013, *Education Week* featured Vancouver Public Schools in a special report, “Managing the Digital District.” Digital Promise subsequently highlighted VPS in a blog post on the rollout of Vancouver’s 1:1 digital transformation.
- As one of the National School Board Association’s first Technology Leadership Network (TLN) Salute Districts (1992), VPS was the first district ever selected to host three TLN site visits (1993, 1999, 2013). A sustained, long-term commitment to the integration of technology into education was one of many reasons why the TLN made a return visit to VPS. Following the visit to Vancouver, the Learning First Alliance spotlighted the district’s efforts to develop future-ready students as a national success story, and Digital Promise again featured VPS in a blog post.
- The National School Boards Association and the SIF (Schools Interoperability Framework) Association collaborated with VPS in developing a 2009 publication entitled, “What School Boards Need to Know: Data Conversations.”

### ***Achievement—Students, Schools, District***

- A national study by Stanford University released in 2019 showed that VPS provides higher than average educational opportunities while children are in school and higher rates of student learning growth in a single year compared to other districts with similar socioeconomic status. An analysis of achievement gaps in every school in America identified poverty as the biggest hurdle. Vancouver’s student learning growth rates in a single year were 14 percent higher than districts across the country with similar socioeconomic status. VPS standardized test scores were at the national average for all students and higher than districts with similar socioeconomic status in the U.S.
- The district performance scorecard, which is available on the VPS website, presents a broader and more balanced view of performance than just test scores. Among VPS “Learning Milestones” tracked since 2014-15, 52 percent (12 out of 23) have shown positive trend slopes.
- Student achievement highlights have included the following:
  - 62.5% of students entered kindergarten ready in all six areas of development and learning, a 6% increase in all students demonstrating readiness skills from 18-19 school year and a 7% increase in the percentage of free and reduced students demonstrating readiness in all six domains
  - 48% increase in number of 2<sup>nd</sup>-5<sup>th</sup> graders served by the Highly Capable program (since 2016)
  - 5.7-point decrease in high school F/NC grades from 13.7% to 8% of grades earned (since 2007)

- 170% increase in the percentage of students in poverty enrolled in at least one AP/IB course (since 2007)
  - 66% of juniors and seniors enrolled in dual credit courses while in high school, exceeding the 2020 target of 62%
  - 71% increase in SAT takers (since 2014)
  - 30-point gain in Clark College placement testing results in writing and 36-point gain in math (2014 to 2018)
  - 13-point increase of the on-time graduation rate to 85% (since 2011)
  - Extended graduation rate of 89%
  - 93% of high school students with no suspensions or expulsions
- VPS students have excelled inside and outside of the classroom, earning regional, state, and national honors in a wide-ranging demonstration of talent, dedication, effort and perseverance. Recent examples of VPS student accomplishments include—perfect ACT score, U.S. Presidential Scholar, National Merit Semifinalists, VEX Robotics state champions and world championship participants; Washington State Knowledge Bowl Tournament, Math is Cool and MathCounts competitions, Collaborative Problem-Solving Contest, U.S. Chemistry Olympiad, Young Epidemiology Scholars (YES) Competition, MESA (Math, Engineering, Science Achievement) state and national challenge, Imagine Tomorrow competition, American Institute of Architecture Design competition, National PTA Reflections Contest, National SkillsUSA competitions, selection to All-State and All-Northwest musical groups, Youth Silent Film Fest, Young Artists Debut Concerto competition, YoungArts competition, Drum Corps Open Class National Championship and National Solo competitions, Alliance for Young Artists and Writers awards, National Hispanic Scholar, National Achievement Scholar, Washington Scholars, Washington Aerospace Scholars, United Nations essay contest, numerous state athletics competitions, USA Cycling Junior National Team, WIAA State Academic Achievement Award, and more.
  - Schools in VPS have garnered state and national recognition, including these special honors:
    - Seven Vancouver schools earned awards from the State Board of Education in 2020. The Washington School Recognition Program includes honors for six Vancouver schools that made gains in academic outcomes and student attendance during the 2018-19 school year: Fruit Valley Community Learning Center and Hazel Dell, Hough, Lincoln, Minnehaha and Salmon Creek elementary schools. In addition, Vancouver Flex Academy was credited for closing opportunity gaps and improving graduation rates. This is Vancouver Flex Academy's second consecutive state recognition. The seven Vancouver schools are among 24 honored schools from Southwest Washington and 391 statewide.
    - U.S. News and World Report's annual list of leading high schools includes four VPS schools in the top one-third of the state and nation.
      - Vancouver School of Arts and Academics: 12<sup>th</sup> in Washington and 749<sup>th</sup> in the nation
      - Skyview High School: 81<sup>st</sup> in Washington and 4,654<sup>th</sup> in the nation
      - Vancouver iTech Preparatory: 97<sup>th</sup> in Washington and 5,172<sup>nd</sup> in the nation
      - Columbia River High School: 100<sup>th</sup> in Washington and 5,339<sup>th</sup> in the nation
 All four schools have appeared on the list in previous years. In addition, Vancouver Flex Academy, Fort Vancouver High School Center for International Studies and Hudson's Bay High School rank in the top 40 percent of Washington high schools. The U.S. has more than 24,000 high schools, and Washington state has 698. Among the state's largest districts, with more than 20,000 students, Vancouver Public Schools is tied with

- Lake Washington and Spokane for the third highest number of schools in Washington's top 100.
- Vancouver Flex Academy/Lewis and Clark High School and Vancouver Home Connection were among 200 schools honored in the state's new recognition system for 2018-19. The new system places more emphasis on the closure of opportunity gaps among student groups as well as schools that have lower levels of achievement but are showing high levels of progress.
  - In 2018, the American Association of School Administrators, Houghton Mifflin Harcourt and the Successful Practices Network named VPS one of the nation's "Most Innovative School Districts" for unique approaches to expand and support student learning and achievement. The selection followed a yearlong case study of Vancouver iTech Preparatory as a model STEM school of choice that facilitates social-emotional learning.
  - For three consecutive years (2016-18), Benjamin Franklin Elementary School was named an OSPI School of Distinction. Vancouver Flex Academy/Lewis and Clark High School also was recognized in 2018. The award goes to the top five percent of highest improving schools in the state for increased English language arts and math achievement over the past five years. At the high school level, an improved graduation rate is also a criterion.
  - The Art Schools network designated Vancouver School of Arts and Academics a 2017-18 Exemplary School. The honor is given to Art Schools Network members that meet principles of exemplary practice in strategically evaluating their purpose, operations and educational programs.
  - In 2016-17, the Fort Vancouver High School Center for International Studies was highlighted in activities of the Asia Society's International Studies Schools Network, including a promotional video and a presentation at the American Association of School Administrators' National Conference on Education. FVHS also hosted an ISSN site visit in May 2017.
  - Four VPS programs of choice—Vancouver School of Arts and Academics, Fort Vancouver Culinary Arts, Hudson's Bay ACES and Vancouver iTech Preparatory—were featured in an article written by Superintendent Steve Webb and Chief of Staff Tom Hagley for the December 2015 issue of *School Administrator* magazine. "Cultivating Creative Schools" described the district's approach to arts-centric learning experiences.
  - Vancouver iTech Preparatory was one of seven schools to receive Washington state's Innovative Schools designation for 2016. It was the only school in Vancouver and Southwest Washington to be selected that year. The total number of Innovative Schools in Washington state is 34, which includes two other VPS schools awarded in previous years. Sarah J. Anderson Elementary was the only Innovative School selected in 2015, and Vancouver School of Arts and Academics was one of 22 given the designation in 2011.
  - For closing achievement gaps, Eisenhower Elementary School received a 2016 Achievement Award from the State Board of Education and OSPI. Four Vancouver schools received 2014 Achievement Awards. Harney and Hough elementary schools were recognized for "High Progress." Eisenhower Elementary School received an award for "English Language Acquisition" and "Reading Growth." Vancouver School of Arts and Academics was honored for "Overall Excellence."

- VPS was one of 30 districts nationwide and one of only three Washington state districts to receive *District Administration* magazine's November 2015 District of Distinction Award. VPS was honored for Vancouver iTech Preparatory, an early college, STEM-focused magnet school for students in grades 6-12.
- The Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development gave Vancouver iTech Preparatory its 2015 Student Engagement Award.
- In 2015, OSPI chose Vancouver iTech Preparatory as one of six Washington STEM Lighthouse Schools. The school operates with a liberal arts STEM focus in which the arts and design are incorporated into the students' presentations and projects. The curriculum is built around a project, problem and practice-based learning design, which occurs within a technology rich environment. Students earn college credits at iTech Prep, and the school has strong partnerships with Washington State University Vancouver, Clark College, and the regional high-tech business community.
- Hudson's Bay High School was one of five Samsung winners in the 2014-15 Solve for Tomorrow contest, earning the school a technology package valued at \$120,000. The school's team, led by horticulture teacher Steve Lorenz, used mushroom mycelia to reclaim cardboard waste and produce mushrooms that can be used for growing kits, as food additives or for large-scale recycling. Hudson's Bay was the only school selected by Samsung employees; the other national winners were chosen through online voting or by a panel of judges.
- *District Administration* magazine spotlighted the Flex Academy at Lewis and Clark High School in a January 2014 article entitled, "The Different Faces of Blended Learning." Formerly an alternative program for students who struggled in a more traditional high school setting, Lewis and Clark transitioned in 2013-14 to a future-focused learning environment where education happens partly through online instruction and partly with the assistance of a teacher.

### ***Instructional Quality***

- One hundred thirty-one of the 11,363 teachers in Washington state and 125,915 teachers in the U.S. who are certified by the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards are employed by VPS, which was one of two pilot sites on the West Coast that helped to develop those standards. Forty-two percent of Vancouver's national board-certified teachers work in the district's highest-need schools.
- According to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction website, 67.4 percent of the 1,406 teachers in VPS hold a master's degree or higher. Their average years of teaching experience is 11.3 years.
- In 2019 and 2020, the National Association of Music Merchants Foundation honored VPS with a "Best Communities for Music Education" award, which recognizes commitment and dedication to music and the arts as part of a well-rounded education. VPS was one of 754 districts across the nation and one of only six in Washington state to receive this honor.

- A December 2019 [article in Education Dive](#) spotlighted the participation of Eisenhower Elementary School in a Washington State University professional development and consultation program to help teachers understand and assist students with adverse childhood experiences. Principal Jennifer Blechschmidt was interviewed for the article.
- Vancouver iTech Preparatory's John Zingale was named the 2019 Washington state History Teacher of the Year and one of 10 finalists for the national title. The award from the nonprofit Gilder Lehrman Institute of American History honors exceptional K-12 American history teachers from every U.S. state, the District of Columbia, Department of Defense schools and U.S. territories.
- Dr. Erin Lark of Vancouver iTech Preparatory was one of five state-level finalists for the Presidential Award for Excellence in Mathematics and Science Teaching, and she advanced to the national competition.
- Since 2008, the Washington State Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development has honored VPS with nine school awards, three program awards, five team awards, and three individual awards. VPS staff members also have received state and regional accolades from their professional associations and other organizations.
- In its September 2018 issue, *District Administration* magazine published an [article](#) on the expansion of evening preschool in VPS.
- Members of the Curriculum and Instruction team and Principals Mychael Irwin and Heath Angelbeck were selected to present the Standards-Based Instructional Design Model at ASCD National Conference in Boston, MA, March 2018.
- The February 2017 issue of *School Administrator* magazine featured VPS and comments by Layne Manning, director of curriculum and instruction, in an article, "[Unlocking Literacy Districtwide.](#)"
- "[A Measured Approach to Measuring Students.](#)" written by Superintendent Steve Webb, was published in the January 2017 issue of *School Administrator* magazine.
- Chief of Staff Tom Hagley was one of three veteran school communications professionals in the U.S. invited by the National School Public Relations Association to be a contributing writer for the 2017 NSPRA monograph, "[Communication Planning and Strategic Tactics for Releasing High-Stakes Test Scores.](#)" This publication is part of the Learning First Alliance's GET IT RIGHT campaign attempting to bring common sense to the standards movement.
- Vancouver school library programs and teacher librarians have received regional and national recognition for their roles in supporting the district's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Flexible Learning Environments initiative. Traci Chun, teacher librarian at Skyview High School, received the 2017 International Society for Technology in Education Librarians Network Award. VPS teacher librarians also have been included in the Library Council of Washington, the Fulbright Teacher Exchange Program, the Washington State Library Common Core Cadre and the Follett Future of Libraries and Classrooms Summit. VPS library programs have been featured in leading professional journals such as *Teacher Librarian* and *School Library Journal*. Three teacher librarians in VPS are national board certified.
- In 2016 the White House and the U.S. Department of Education recognized VPS for systemic efforts to increase classroom instructional time by [reducing student testing](#).

- Kathy Everidge, assistant superintendent for human resources, received a 2016 Student Achievement Leadership Award from the Washington Association of School Administrators Region 112. She was recognized for her leadership in expanding programs of choice and increasing the on-time graduation rate.
- The Washington Professional Educator Standards Board highlighted VPS Human Resources in a 2014 case study of best practices in teacher recruitment and selection. Specifically, the board concluded that the practices of most districts fall short of “best,” and most districts struggle to combine multiple best practices into a cohesive system. VPS, according to the board’s assessment, has succeeded in areas where others have continued to experience challenges.
- Anne Galvas, then-coordinator of the Homeless Outreach Promoting Education (HOPE) program, was named the 2013 Washington State Classified School Employee of the Year. Eddie Sawyer, innovative technology solutions coordinator, was the southwest Washington regional winner in 2015.
- Magnet schools and programs of choice in VPS were highlighted in Building a Culture of Hope: Enriching Schools with Optimism and Opportunity by Robert Barr and Emily Gibson (Solution Tree, 2013).
- Mark Ray, then-director of innovation and library services, was selected as the 2012 Washington State Teacher of the Year. In recent times, five VPS educators have received Educational Service District 112 regional Teacher of the Year honors: Kendra Yamamoto, Bethany Rivard, Ken Roberts, Mark Ray and Eric Saueracker.

### ***Safe and Supportive Schools***

- With the well-being of students as its top priority, VPS has committed to promoting safe and supportive learning environments.
  - Bill Link, then-safe and supportive schools manager, was named 2018 Northwest Positive Behavior Supports Champion.
  - In 2014, the U.S. Department of Education awarded the district with a School Climate Transformation Grant of nearly \$3 million over five years. Grant funds are being used to accelerate and expand VPS’ efforts to improve student achievement by focusing on positive student behavior and school climate.
  - The VPS aquatic centers staff earned the 2013 Gold International Aquatic Safety Award presented by Jeff Ellis & Associates. This was the second Gold Award given to VPS staff in just 3.5 years of operating the district’s swimming pools.
  - Washington State Crime Prevention Association honored Mick Hoffman, then-assistant superintendent and chief of operations, and the VPS security team with the “Non Law Enforcement Agency of the Year Award” for 2011.
  - VPS consistently has earned high marks on school bus inspections by the Washington State Patrol.

## ***District Management and Operations***

- Due to a low inventory of district-owned portable classrooms and a multi-year budget planning process that has increased the district's reserve fund balance, in 2016 VPS was able to secure and provide the required matching funds for a facilities construction grant to reduce K-3 class size totaling nearly \$43 million. Approximately 20 percent of the state's available grant funds were awarded to VPS.
- VPS has acted as a responsible steward of public resources. In 2020, for the 14<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, the district received a clean fiscal audit report from the Washington State Auditor's Office.
- VPS maintained its Aa2 credit rating with Moody's Investors Service prior to the first three bond sales from the \$458 million 2017 authorization. Moody's commended the district on sound financial management, improving fund balance, and history of excellent community support.
- In recent times, cost savings have been generated through the following changes in business models and management practices:
  - Zero-based Budgeting: This process, first implemented in 2015-16, helped to identify approximately \$550,000 in central administrative resources that were redirected to other priorities.
  - Central Administration and Operation Support Services: On a cost per student basis, VPS spent approximately \$2.3 million less on central office and school-level administration in 2016-17 than the other 14 largest districts in the state (more than 20,000 students enrolled). Among the nine Clark County school districts, VPS had the second lowest percentage of expenditures for central and school-level administration.
  - Fund Balance: Following the recommendations of the state auditor, the district has increased its ending fund balance, or financial reserve, from four to 11 percent over the past 10 years.
  - Nutrition Services: Direct delivery to schools reduced the need for warehouse space and lowered staffing costs while dramatically increasing the selection of food products available for purchase. In addition, more schools were converted to satellite sites, which necessitated fewer kitchen managers. Total savings were approximately \$1.5 million per year.
  - Warehouse/Purchasing Services: By implementing a procurement card system and eliminating a centralized receiving model, VPS was able to eliminate three warehouse positions and two purchasing positions. In addition, as part of the nutrition services redesign, the district saved \$5 million by not having to remodel the warehouse, \$1 million by not having to replace aging freezers, and \$100,000 annually by closing an auxiliary warehouse and eliminating a semi-trailer used for frozen food overflow.
  - Transportation Services: VPS achieved a 100 percent efficiency rating from OSPI for the second consecutive year in 2018-19. In addition, VPS was selected as one of 22 districts to receive Dept. of Ecology grants to subsidize the purchase of zero-emission electric buses and the associated charging infrastructure.
  - Maintenance Services: The 2012 construction of a new, consolidated maintenance facility has generated efficiencies by eliminating the need for leased shop space and by reducing three crew leader positions and two assistant crew leader positions.

- The May 2011 issue of *Principal Communicator*, published by the National School Public Relations Association, spotlighted the public engagement process used by VPS to identify and communicate budget priorities in response to anticipated funding cuts from the state.
- VPS is recognized as a state and national leader in reducing environmental impact and costs, improving student and staff health and wellness, and providing effective environmental and sustainability education.
  - In 2016, Gaiser Middle School was named one of 47 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools. In addition, the Washington Green Schools organization has recognized Gaiser as a Platinum Green School, demonstrating certification in six environmental categories: energy, healthy school buildings, school grounds and gardens, transportation, waste and recycling and water.
  - In the previous year, Gaiser earned the Washington State Green School Leader award from the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. District Sustainability Award from the U.S. Department of Education. Among many other accomplishments in this area, VPS reduced energy use by 16.79 percent between the 2005-06 and 2012-13 school years. The energy cost avoidance resulted in accumulative savings of approximately \$2.7 million.
  - In 2013, Vancouver was one of four school districts in Washington State identified as a Green District Leader. Sacajawea Elementary School was the first Washington Green Schools Level 3 certified school in the state and was among the 64 schools announced as 2013 U.S. Department of Education Green Ribbon Schools.