

Dear PSE Members,

PSE has come a long ways in my eight-plus years as Executive Director. I have enjoyed every minute of my work to gain respect and fair treatment for our members and all classified employees in our public schools. Working together, the last three years have been especially rewarding and full of positive changes. Together, our affiliation with SEIU and our Stepping Up PR campaign have created new opportunities and unprecedented success for this organization, which have resulted in many meaningful benefits for our hard-working members.

I firmly believe there are even greater challenges and successes to be had in the future. As you know, we've worked hard to cultivate friends and allies in Olympia and around the state to help implement our vision for smarter and safer schools. We need educated, capable leaders at all levels who understand the shortcomings of our public schools, and are willing to make courageous decisions to support higher academic standards and more adequately fund our education system.

Over the past few months, I have come to realize that changes are needed to make our Stepping Up vision a reality. Our state is lacking the necessary leadership, positive outlook, and specific knowledge to lead our schools to the next level. That is why I have seriously considered becoming a candidate for state Superintendent for Public Instruction. Our current schools leader is ineffective and can no longer advocate for the changes that are needed.

I believe I can best serve the students of this state – and the 26,000 women and men of PSE – by running for OSPI. That is why I am forming a committee and announcing my intention within the next week to be a candidate for office in 2008.

I have worked in and around the public education system all my life, as a teacher, principal, motivational speaker, consultant, former chair of the House Education Committee and Executive Director of PSE. As you know, most of my family are school employees or working toward earning a teaching degree. I know how our public schools work from top to bottom and I can lay out a positive vision for our school system. I appreciate the vital roles played by all educational employees and stakeholders. And I understand the political process where changes need to be made.

Thank you for the tremendous faith you have placed in me these past eight years and for your support toward victory this November.