

For Immediate Release

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Shaping the Future of School Leadership in Rural Communities

Renewed funding ensures rural school leaders receive high-quality professional learning through UW Center for Educational Leadership.

We are thrilled to announce the continuation of the Aspiring Leaders program, thanks to renewed financial support from Ballmer Group. Before this expanded investment, College Spark Washington generously supported one year of programming for two initial cohorts, helping establish a strong foundation for the work. This vital five-year partnership ensures that local school leaders, particularly those serving rural communities, have access to high-quality professional learning delivered in collaboration with the University of Washington Center for Educational Leadership (UW CEL).

The Aspiring Leaders program is specifically designed to equip current and future school leaders with the skills and perspective needed to foster positive change within their schools. A key focus of the training is on lifting the voices of students to directly inform school strategies and create a positive, lasting impact on student learning experiences.

“The quality of leadership in our schools is directly tied to the success of our students,” said Alicia Jacob, Assistant Superintendent of Educational Services at ESD 105. “Thanks to Ballmer Group’s investment, we can continue to partner with the experts at UW CEL to provide tailored, practical training that addresses the unique needs of our rural schools. This work is fundamentally about empowering leaders who will, in turn, empower our students.”

A unique and invaluable component of the program is the opportunity it provides for peer connection and regional collaboration. Leaders from various districts across the region can meet, observe, reflect, and grow together, creating a supportive network that extends beyond formal training sessions. This collaborative approach enhances professional reflection and accelerates the adoption of best practices.

The ongoing support from Ballmer Group highlights their commitment to strengthening regional educational systems and ensuring that students in all communities—especially those in rural areas—benefit from strong, visionary school leadership and feel a sense of belonging and relevance within their educational experience.

For more information, please contact: Alicia Jacobs, Assistant Superintendent

About ESD 105:

ESD 105 serves the educational needs of schools and students in South Central Washington. Through partnerships, internal collaboration, and innovation, ESD 105 serves and supports students, families, and communities by removing barriers and transforming lives.