



# FINLEY SCHOOL DISTRICT #53

ALL KIDS ACHIEVING

224606 E Game Farm Rd, Kennewick WA 99337 509-586-3217 FAX 509-586-4408

May 2, 2012

State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 47206  
Room 254  
Olympia, WA 98504-7206

Attention: State Board of Education

The Finley School District School Board would like to request a waiver for grades K-12 of the minimum 180-day school year for the 2012-2013 school year, only. The District has a plan to improve learning for all students.

It is the belief of the District, staff and parents that three days utilized for student led parent/teacher conferences is more beneficial and productive to student learning than the 180-day school year schedule with early release days for conferences.

The Finley School District is committed to meeting expectations. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Sincerely,

  
Lance Vahn  
Superintendent

**Part A: For all new and renewal applications:**

(Please include as much detail as possible. The spaces provided below each question for answers will expand as you type or paste text).

<i>1. School District Information</i>	
District	Finley School District
Superintendent	Lance Hahn
County	Benton
Phone	509-586-3217
Mailing Address	224606 East Game Farm Road Kennewick, WA 99337

<i>2. Contact Person Information</i>	
Name	Lance Hahn
Title	Superintendent
Phone	509-586-3217
Email	lhahn@finleysd.org

<i>3. Application type:</i>	
New Application or Renewal Application	New Application

<i>4. Is the request is for all schools in the district?</i>	
Yes or No	Yes
If no, then which schools or grades is the request for?	

<i>5. How many days are being requested to be waived and for which school years?</i>	
Number of Days	3
School Years	2012-2013

<i>6. Will the waiver days result in a school calendar with fewer half-days?</i>	
Number of half-days before any reduction	No
Reduction	
Remaining number of half days in calendar	2

7. Will the district be able to meet the required annual instructional hour offerings (RCW 28A.150.220 and WAC 180-16-215) for the school years for which the waiver is requested?

Yes or No      Yes

8. What are the purpose and goals of the waiver?

The purpose of the waiver is to provide three full days of Student-Led/Parent conferences. The use of student led conferences on full days will help us meet our goal of increased parent involvement and participation. As a district we are part of the RIG TPEP Consortium and the student led conferences fit with the teacher criteria #3 – Reflection – recognizing individual student learning needs and developing strategies to address those needs and #7 – Parents and Community – communicating and collaborating with parents and school community. This also fits with the principal criteria #7 – engaging the community. Finally, students use common core thinking skills to present and manage the student led conference.

9. What is the student achievement data motivating the purpose and goals of the waiver?

Finley School District student achievement data continues to show a need to meet the academic needs of all students. As a district, we hope to better educate all students and actively involve students and their parents in our schools.

10. Describe the measures and standards used to determine success and identification of expected benchmarks and results.

We will use grade level MSP, HSPE results, classroom based assessments, EOCs, graduation rates and MAP testing to determine student academic progress. Success will be achieved when we close the achievement gap and all students meet grade level standards and graduate with a high school diploma. We currently have 100% participation at the middle and high school in the student led conferences and 100% participation at the elementary level.

11. Describe the evidence the district and/or schools will collect to show whether the goals were attained.

The evidence that will show whether the goals were attained is demonstrated by the participation of parents, students and staff in looking at and evaluating the individual student portfolios, as well as MAP testing data, state testing data and student attendance rates.

12. Describe the content and process of the strategies to be used to meet the goals of the waiver.

Student led conferences have been developed and incorporated into the middle school and high school using Navigation 101 and STAR Advisory. Students and parents at the elementary are actively involved in assessing and evaluating individual student work in a model that is consistent with student led conferences. We have 100% participation at all three schools.

*13. Describe the innovative nature of the proposed strategies.*

The goal is to involve parents in their student's academic program at all grade levels. Using Student Led Conferences places students in the center of the process and each student actively presents their work and portfolio. This is consistent with the Common Core State Standards thinking skills that students need to master. The student led conference process involves critical thinking by challenging students to analyze and evaluate their portfolio. It also involves complex thinking because students must clarify and interpret their portfolio. Finally, by utilizing communicative thinking, students learn to reason, connect and represent their work not only to their teachers but to their parents.

*14. Waiver requests may be for up to three school years. How will activities in the subsequent years be connected to those of the first year of the waiver?*

We are currently asking for a waiver for only the 2012-2013 school year. During the spring of 2013, we will assess the need for an additional waiver or look at other alternatives. The goal is to make sure that the student led conferences are meeting student, teacher and parent needs.

*15. Describe how the waiver directly supports the district and/or school improvement plans? Include links or information about how the State Board of Education may review the district and school improvement plans (do not mail or fax hard copies).*

The waiver supports the goals of the School Board, the District's Vision, Mission and Goals, each individual building's School Improvement Plan and the individual student learning plans.

*16. Describe how administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students, and the community been involved in the development of the request for this waiver.*

The Superintendent, School Board, Finley Education Association and Public School Employees as well as community members support this request because we all believe that student led conferences more actively involve parents in our schools.

*17. A. Provide details about the collective bargaining agreements (CBA), including the number of professional development days, full instruction days, half-days, parent-teacher conferences, and the amount of other non-instruction time. Please also provide a link to the district's CBA or e-mail it with the application materials. Do not send a hard copy of the CBA.*

Full Instruction Days – 141

Partial Days – 36 (2 hour early release days)

Conference Days – 3

The two-hour Early Release Wednesdays are used to promote a cohesive learning environment, improve instruction and improve student learning. Students are dismissed two hours early each Wednesday. Teachers participate in teaming and collaboration, peer observation, focused professional in-service as developed by the District Advisory Committee and building related activities. Since Finley School District is actively involved in the RIG TPEP consortium, teachers and administrators provide constant and continual input into the evaluation process in an effort to begin implementing the new evaluation system for the 2012-2013 school year.

17.B. Please provide the number of days per year for the following categories:

1. Student instructional days (as requested in application)	177
2. Waiver days (as requested in application)	3
3. Additional teacher work days without students	5
Total	182

17.C. If the district has teacher work days over and above the 180 school days (as identified in row three of the table in 17.B), please provide the following information about the days:

Day	Percent of teachers required to participate	District directed activities	School directed activities	Teacher directed activities
1	Optional	X		
2	Optional	X		
3	Optional	X		
4	Optional		X	
5	Optional		X	
6	Optional			
7	Optional			
Check those that apply				

17.D. If the district has teacher work days over and above the 180 school days (row three of table in 17.B), please also explain the rationale for the additional need of waiver days. The district directed work days are used at the start of the school year to analyze testing and assessment data for each student by working in grade level teams, building teams and district teams with the goal of providing flexible and fluid programs that meet the individual student's needs and learning plan. Teachers and administrators also use the time to discuss strategies for implementation of new programs defined by the state such as TPEP and Common Core Standards.

New 180 Day Applications- Stop here and skip to the "Last Steps" section.

Part B: For Renewal Applications.

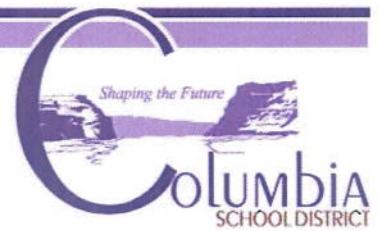
18. Describe how the district or schools used the waiver days and whether the days were used as planned and reported in your prior request?

*19. How well were the purpose and goals for the previous waiver met? Using the measures and standards, describe the district's success at meeting each of the expected benchmarks and results of the previous waiver.*

*20. How were the parents and the community kept informed on an on-going basis about the use and impact of the waiver?*

### Last Steps:

- Please print a copy for your records.
- Mail or email the school board resolution, supporting documents, and this application to the email or mailing address on the first page.
- Note: When providing supplemental documents, please identify the questions that the documents support.
- Thank you for completing this application.



755 MAPLE STREET  
BURBANK, WA 99323  
PH: 509-547-2136  
FX: 509-546-0603  
WWW.CSD400.ORG  
DR. LOUIS GATES, SUPERINTENDENT

July 24, 2012

Washington State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 47206  
Olympia, WA 98504-7206

Dear Members of the State Board of Education,

Among a long list of agenda items for your July 11-12, 2012 meeting, you considered 180-day waiver requests from school districts including those seeking full-day parent-teacher conference waivers. This stemmed from a relatively new interpretation of somewhat conflicting language found in RCW 28A.150.203 and RCW 28A.150.205 (copies attached)—the former relates to the definition of a school day; the latter requires at least 1000 hours of annual instruction per district *inclusive* of passing time, recesses, and parent-teacher conferences.

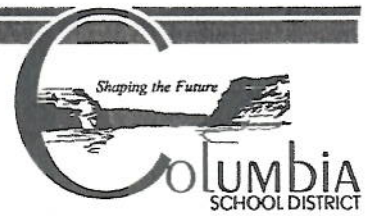
At the meeting, you denied our District's request for full-day parent-teacher conferences for our elementary and middle schools. It remains unclear as to the reasons for this denial (perhaps the minutes of the meeting, once available, will clear this confusion). Regardless, this ruling would require that we renegotiate the school calendar in which our school board and teachers association agreed upon for the 2012-13 school year calendar (attached); we believe that this is unnecessary if you reconsider your decision and grant our waiver request. We base our reasonable appeal upon a number of issues, including for the following bulleted ones:

- Our School District holds formal parent-teacher conferences for the elementary and middle schools and informal conferences for Columbia High School.
- The Columbia School District Board of Directors supports all-day parent-teacher conferences for our elementary and middle schools.
- Our District developed the accompanying document, titled Computation of Total Program Offerings, which we modeled after the M-808 document used by your body in the late 1990s; this model document shows that our District, each of our schools, and all of our grades from the first through the twelfth exceed the required 1000 basic education minimum hours per RCW 28A.150.205, as the following supports:
  - District-wide our schools average 1028 annual instructional hours, significantly exceeding the minimum requirement.
  - The annual instructional hours for Columbia Elementary and Columbia Middle Schools are 1018 and 1032 respectively.
  - Rather than meeting only during the school day when a number of our parents work day jobs, the all-day conferences allow flexibility to schedule afternoon and evening conferences.

We want to thank Jack Archer for calling to inform our District of your ruling. We also appreciate that you are willing to reconsider your decision in the interest of providing equity of our District with other school districts, in acknowledgement that our District exceeds the 1000 hours of instruction, and to respect the value that our stakeholders place in elementary and middle school all-day parent-teacher conferences. Thank you.

Sincerely,

  
Dr. Lou Gates, Ed.D.  
Superintendent



755 MAPLE STREET  
BURBANK, WA 99323  
PH: 509-547-2136  
FX: 509-546-0603  
WWW.CSD400.ORG  
DR. LOUIS GATES, SUPERINTENDENT

May 7, 2012

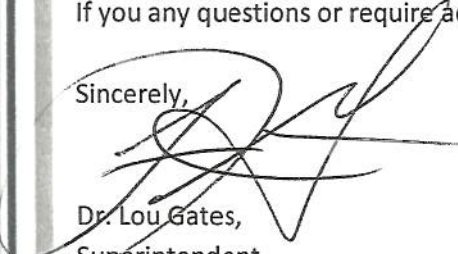
Jack Archer  
State Board of Education  
PO Box 47206  
Olympia, WA 98504-7206

Dear Mr. Archer:

The Columbia School District School Board requests a three (3) year waiver from the 180-day school year for grades K-8 (WAC 28A.150.205). Our Parent-Teacher Conferences represent an important student-teacher-parent communication link. In part to meet his end, we request three (3) full conference days. Also, we attached our board resolution and requisite waiver.

If you any questions or require additional documentation, please contact me.

Sincerely,



Dr. Lou Gates,  
Superintendent



**COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #400**

**BURBANK, WA 99323**

**RESOLUTION #1112-03**

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education has the authority to grant waivers from the basic education program requirements based on legislative authority RCW 28A.305.140 and RCW 28A.655.180);

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education respects the value of teacher and student contact time. Waivers are exceptions from basic education program requirements in that they provide "exceptional opportunities" for districts and schools to be innovative in enhancing the educational program for all students while meeting the challenges of their school calendars;

**WHEREAS**, the State Board of Education may grant a waiver of the minimum one hundred eighty-day school year requirements (RCW 28A.150.220) for up to three years;

**WHEREAS**, the definition of a "school day" does not include parent/teacher conferences (RCW 28A.150.203);

**WHEREAS**, Columbia School District will continue to exceed the minimum 1,000 instructional hours requirement (RCW 28A.150.220);

**WHEREAS**, the definition of "instructional hours" does include parent/teacher conferences (RCW 28A.150.205);

**WHEREAS**, Columbia School District will provide the parent/teacher conferences in a format that allows for flexibility in schedules to accommodate parents and efficiency of transportation and food service;

**WHEREAS**, Columbia School District encourages students, when age appropriate, to participate in parent/teacher conferences to take ownership of their learning and achievement;

**WHEREAS**, Columbia School District has set a goal of over 90% participation in parent/teacher conferences;

**WHEREAS**, Under the three full-day conference format students actually spend more time in classroom instruction during conference weeks compared to a six half-day plan, which increases student opportunity for achievement;

**WHEREAS**, Columbia School District desires to provide parent/teacher conferences two full days in the fall and one full day in the spring to accommodate families during the 2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015 school years by requesting a waiver of three school days each year;

**NOW, THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED** that the Board of Directors of Columbia School District #400, Walla Walla County, Washington, hereby authorize its Superintendent to request waiver of RCW 28A.150.220, "Basic education – Minimum instructional requirements";

**THEREFORE, the forgoing resolution was APPROVED** by the Board of Directors of Columbia School District #400, Walla Walla County, Washington, in a meeting thereof held on May 7, 2011.

Michael

~~Mike~~ Scrimsher

Mike Scrimsher

~~Vice~~ Chair

2015

Sheena Kelly

Sheena Kelly

Member

2013

Connie Smith

Connie Smith

Member

2015

Troy Woody

Troy Woody

Member

2015

Sonny Townsend

Absent

Member

2013



Secretary of the Board

Louis Gates

Columbia School District #400

## Application for Waiver from the Minimum One Hundred Eighty-day School Year Requirement of the Basic Education Program Requirements

---

The State Board of Education's authority to grant waivers from the basic education program requirement is RCW 28A.305.140 and RCW 28A.655.180(1). The rules that govern requests for waivers are in WAC 180-18-030, WAC 180-18-040, and WAC 180-18-050.

The State Board of Education respects the value of teacher and student contact time. Waivers are exceptions from basic education program requirements in that they provide "exceptional opportunities" for districts and schools to be innovative in enhancing the educational program for all students while meeting the challenges of their school calendars.

### Directions:

Waiver requests must use the Waiver Application Form and must be submitted electronically to the State Board of Education at least fifty days prior to the SBE meeting where consideration of the waiver will occur. Districts or schools are responsible for finding out when the State Board of Education meetings are held. The Board's meeting schedule is posted on its website <http://www.sbe.wa.gov> or may be obtained by contacting the Board by calling 360.725.6029 or emailing to [sbe@k12.wa.us](mailto:sbe@k12.wa.us).

The application must be accompanied by a resolution adopted and signed by the district board of directors requesting the waiver. The **resolution shall identify**:

- The basic education requirements for which the waiver is requested;
- The school years for which the waiver is requested;
- The number of days each school year for which the waiver is requested;
- How the waiver will support increasing student achievement; and
- Assurance that the district will meet the annual average 1,000 hours of instructional hour offerings (RCW 28A.150.220 and WAC 180-16-215).

Complete this application form and submit it with the Board resolution and supporting documents to (electronic submission through email is preferred):

Jack Archer  
The Washington State Board of Education  
P.O. Box 47206  
Olympia, WA 98504-7206  
360-725-6035; Fax 360-586-2357  
[jack.archer@k12.wa.us](mailto:jack.archer@k12.wa.us)

**Part A: For all new and renewal applications:**

(Please include as much detail as possible. The spaces provided below each question for answers will expand as you type or paste text).

<b>1. School District Information</b>	
District	Columbia School District
Superintendent	Dr. Lou Gates
County	Walla Walla
Phone	509-547-2136
Mailing Address	755 Maple St. Burbank, WA 99323

<b>2. Contact Person Information</b>	
Name	Dr. Lou Gates
Title	Superintendent
Phone	509-547-2136
Email	lou.gates@csd400.org

<b>3. Application type:</b>	
New Application or Renewal Application	New Application

<b>4. Is the request is for all schools in the district?</b>	
Yes or No	No
If no, then which schools or grades is the request for?	Columbia Elementary and Columbia Middle Schools only

<b>5. How many days are being requested to be waived and for which school years?</b>	
Number of Days	Three
School Years	2012-2013, 2013-2014, 2014-2015

<b>6. Will the waiver days result in a school calendar with fewer half-days?</b>	
Number of half-days before any reduction	9
Reduction	3
Remaining number of half days in calendar	6

<b>7. Will the district be able to meet the required annual instructional hour offerings (RCW 28A.150.220 and WAC 180-16-215) for the school years for which the waiver is requested?</b>	
Yes or No	Yes

<b>8. What are the purpose and goals of the waiver?</b>	
Three all-day parent-teacher conference days	

<b>9. What is the student achievement data motivating the purpose and goals of the waiver?</b>	
Through analysis of our achievement data, Columbia School District continues to demonstrate the need to meet the academic needs of all students in our district. Through data review, we continue to assiduously to support our students living in poverty, special education students,	

migrant/bilingual students, and students that require continued continue interventions. Fewer half days devoted to parent-teacher conferences will the elementary and middle school teachers to work with our K-8 students and parents in a less disruptive model. Also, there are few day cares in the area and our students live in a rural environment leading to more disruption for six half day conferences than three full day conferences. Additionally, having the students attend full day keeps our schedules consistent and structured and increases the amount of instructional time for the students. Through this model, we have been successful in bringing in nearly every parent for student conferences.

*10. Describe the measures and standards used to determine success and identification of expected benchmarks and results.*

Primarily we use the MSP/HSPE results in conjunction with formative and summative assessments from the classroom; DIBELs and Woodcock benchmarks; District testing programs; and other school-centered student data collections. Additionally, we review our graduation rates, EOC's, and other achievement gap indicators to evaluate long-term student academic progress. Additionally, the full day model tends to increase student attendance in that attendance in comparison with half days.

*11. Describe the evidence the district and/or schools will collect to show whether the goals were attained.*

MSP/HSPE results in conjunction with formative and summative assessments from the classroom; DIBELs and Woodcock benchmarks; District testing programs; and other school centered student data collections, including graduations rates, EOC's and achievement gap monitoring.

*12. Describe the content and process of the strategies to be used to meet the goals of the waiver.*

We solicited input from our community, district Guiding Coalition governance team and our Board of Directors to measure if our conference schedules meet the needs of the students, parents and our community. As we review our waiver, school attendance, conference participation, increased student instructional time will be analyzed relative to the how these variables tend to support the goals of the waiver.

*13. Describe the innovative nature of the proposed strategies.*

Our full day offerings are increased by three days through decreasing the overall half days by six days. As noted below, the full days also helps to support meeting with all parents, increase student attendance, and helps to better structure our year. This structure brought increased parent involvement and provided positive parent feedback as well.

*14. Waiver requests may be for up to three school years. How will activities in the subsequent years be connected to those of the first year of the waiver?*

The conference days will be reviewed annually to make sure they are meeting student, parent and teacher needs.

15. Describe how the waiver directly supports the district and/or school improvement plans? Include links or information about how the State Board of Education may review the district and school improvement plans (do not mail or fax hard copies).

The waiver supports the goals of the Board, the District Strategic Plan and the individual school improvement plans. The waiver also supports the notion that fewer half days and more full days of instructional time positively impacts student learning and the school district and community. Our guiding documents can be found at our website ([www.csd400.org](http://www.csd400.org)). In particular, review the Unified Instructional Core. (The administrative team wrote a paper that describes this Unified Instructional Core. However, it is under consideration for publication by JSD and unavailable for dissemination until the JSD editors render their decision.)

16. Describe how administrators, teachers, other staff, parents, students, and the community been involved in the development of the request for this waiver.

The structure and schedule for conferences which in turn is the reason for this waiver, were developed by the Columbia School District Leadership Team, Board of Directors, Columbia Education Association, Public School Employees, and Parent Teacher organizations.

17.A. Provide details about the collective bargaining agreements (CBA), including the number of professional development days, full instruction days, half-days, parent-teacher conferences, and the amount of other non-instruction time. Please also provide a link to the district's CBA or e-mail it with the application materials. Do not send a hard copy of the CBA.

1. Full Instructional Days	Elementary: 166 Middle School: 167
2. Professional Development Days	3 Days (State Waiver Approved)
3. Student Conference Days	3 Days (Elementary and Middle School Only)
4. Half Days	Elementary: 8 Days Middle School: 7 Days

17.B. Please provide the number of days per year for the following categories:

1. Student instructional days (as requested in application)	174 Days
2. Waiver days (as requested in application)	3 Days (Elementary and Middle School Only)
3. Additional teacher work days without students	3 Days (Includes Approved Waiver)
Total	180 Days

17.C. If the district has teacher work days over and above the 180 school days (as identified in row three of the table in 17.B), please provide the following information about the days:

Day	Percent of teachers required to participate	District directed activities	School directed activities	Teacher directed activities
1	X Optional			

	Check those that apply	
<p>17.D. If the district has teacher work days over and above the 180 school days (row three of table in 17.B), please also explain the rationale for the additional need of waiver days. The extra work day is optional, which is beyond the 180 day Collectable Bargaining Agreement between the District and the Columbia Educational Association.</p>		

New 180 Day Applications- Stop here and skip to the "Last Steps" section.

**Part B: For Renewal Applications.**

<p><i>18. Describe how the district or schools used the waiver days and whether the days were used as planned and reported in your prior request?</i></p>

<p><i>19. How well were the purpose and goals for the previous waiver met? Using the measures and standards, describe the district's success at meeting each of the expected benchmarks and results of the previous waiver.</i></p>

<p><i>20. How were the parents and the community kept informed on an on-going basis about the use and impact of the waiver?</i></p>

**Last Steps:**

- Please print a copy for your records.
- Mail or email the school board resolution, supporting documents, and this application to the email or mailing address on the first page.
- Note: When providing supplemental documents, please identify the questions that the documents support.
- Thank you for completing this application.

**COMPUTATION OF TOTAL PROGRAM HOUR OFFERINGS**

**COLUMBIA SCHOOL DISTRICT #400**

A.	Total minutes from start to end of school day: From Step 1 (see instructions on page 16).	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
		390	390	390	390	390	395	395	395	405	405	405	405
B.	Minutes actually spent for eating lunch time meals: From Step 2	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	20	31	31	31	31
C.	Net minutes in "Total Program Offering" per day: Line A Line B =	370	370	370	370	370	375	375	375	374	374	374	374
D.	"Total Program Offerig" per year: Line C x (180) days =	66,600	66,600	66,600	66,600	66,600	67,500	67,500	67,500	67,500	67,320	67,320	67,320

E.	Annual minutes lost to noncountable release time per year:												
	*Collaboration -Late Start (60 min x 32 wks =)	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920	1920
	*Early Release (6 x _____ )	1380	1380	1380	1380	1380	1410	1410	1410	1470	1470	1470	1470
	*Conference Early Release - Not Counted (from 284.150,203)	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
	*High School Testing Early Release - 4 Days Counted	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	980	980	980	980
	*Staff Development/Waiver Days (3 Days )	1110	1110	1110	1110	1110	1125	1125	1125	1122	1122	1122	1122
	*Requested Parent/Teacher Waiver Days (3 Days)	1110	1110	1110	1110	1110	1125	1125	1125	0	0	0	0

F.	Net minutes in "Total Program Offering" per year:	61,080	61,080	61,080	61,080	61,080	61,920	61,920	61,920	61,828	61,828	61,828	61,828
----	---	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------	--------

	Indicate N/A (not applicable) for any grade(s) not offered at this school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Totals by grade level groupings:	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,032	1,032	1,032	1,030	1,030	1,030	1,030
	<b>Total Hours</b>	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,018	1,032	1,032	1,032	1,030	1,030	1,030	1,030

**AVERAGE ANNUAL HOURS BY DISTRICT** 1,026

\* Elementary & Middle School - 2 Days Conference Early Release