

Meet 2018 Teacher of the Year Mandy Manning

Mandy Manning was a media and film major at Eastern Washington University who never imagined her career in a classroom. She was going to be a screenwriter and producer.

But then, during years of extensive travel around the nation and world, she kept hearing the same advice from disparate voices wherever she went.

“You ought to be a teacher,” they said. She heard it on a first job in Shelton, Washington; again on a Peace Corps assignment in Armenia; then again while living in Texas.

All of those disparate observers saw the same thing. Even without formal training, Manning possessed the qualities of a great teacher – compassion, enthusiasm, love of learning and a great way with kids. She was a natural.

Manning heeded the call. After a master’s degree and teaching assignments in Texas, Japan and New York, she returned to her childhood home of Spokane in 2008. Three years at Lewis and Clark High School then led to a very special opportunity at Ferris High School in 2011.

There, Manning was hired to teach in the school’s Newcomer Center, an English Language Development (ELD) program for non-native speakers. The program is one of the few of its kind in the state.

In a typical semester, she will count roughly 30 students from a dozen or more nations. The only common thread is that none speak English. That, however, is very temporary.

On the first day, new students are greeted with introductions and hugs. Then the magic begins. Manning and bilingual specialist Luisa Orellana weave lessons in reading, ELD and math into larger pathways to education and opportunity.



Mandy Manning photographed at Manito Park.

Within a semester, most transition into traditional classrooms. Some of her early students are now in college.

Former Ferris Assistant Principal John O’Dell says Manning’s success is due, in part, to the fact her work extends beyond the classroom. “Mandy is a tireless worker for the students and families she serves,” he wrote. “This includes involvement in local refugee support organizations and countless home visits.”

“These acts of concern have a ripple effect through the

classroom,” adds ELD colleague and department lead Amanda Mills. “They create an atmosphere in which students know how much she values their cultures and how invested she is in their success.”

Indeed, her students’ success has gone so wide and deep that Manning herself has received a special honor. She has been named the 2018 Regional Teacher of the Year in the seven-county region served by NEWESD 101. With that honor comes automatic nomination for the state Teacher of the Year award.

Manning, however, doesn’t care much about personal accolades. For her, it’s all about the kids. If they are successful, she is successful. And therein lies another of the special qualities seen by those disparate observers back in the 1990s.

With all due respect to the Manning family of professional football fame, friends of Mandy say the more significant Book of Manning is the one being written in Spokane.

This book is not about games on Sundays. It is about a teacher changing the world, seven days a week, one life at a time.

Dr. Callahan was right

Professor Richard Callahan taught the very first education course I ever took when, in the midst of earning a degree in political science, I concluded that what I really wanted to do was become a teacher.

Though I don't remember all that much about the content of that class, I have always remembered something he told us that has proven more than true throughout my career.

He told the young, aspiring teachers that when we got our first job, or any job thereafter, the most important thing we could do is to quickly make friends with both the head secretary and the custodian. *He knew whereof he spoke.*



In a short month from now, the talented secretary (actually executive secretary) with whom I have worked closely at NEWESD, **Sara Ballard**, is retiring after 24 years of service here – the last 22 working directly with my predecessors, Drs. Brian

Talbott and Terry Munther, and me.

Sara joined the NEWESD team upon her arrival in Spokane in 1993 when her husband's career necessitated a move to Eastern Washington. Initially our agency's receptionist, she was tapped by Dr. Talbott to become the assistant to the superintendent in very short order.

Because that college professor was indeed right, it is no surprise to anyone on our team or amongst the districts we serve that Ms. Ballard has had an indelible influence on the culture and fabric of our ESD.

Great secretaries always do – they are the ones who know most everything, provide support in both big

and small ways, and who often, ultimately, assure their department, school or organization reflects the best of who *they* are.

Over the past 38 years I have personally been blessed to work with incredible head secretaries/administrative assistants in each role I have held – Rona (Miller) Galbreath and Nancy Weber at Ritzville HS; Lannie Cubley at Lewis and Clark; Pat Erickson and Anne Bruya at Shadle Park; Marylou Robinson at Mt. Spokane; Kay Savitz in the Spokane Public Schools; Sharon Throop in the Cheney Public Schools; and Sara Ballard here at NEWESD.

Each of these nine professionals went over and above to support others, usually had the answers needed, and always willingly found the answers if they didn't immediately know them. I was and remain grateful to each of them.

They each, in their own ways, made the jobs of fellow staff members easier, indeed possible, because of the work *they* did. And that is what Sara Ballard has done over the course of almost a quarter century at NEWESD 101. She will leave our organization in early October in the same way that good Scouts leave a campsite – *better than she found it.*

As a new school year gets underway, it is an appropriate time for all of us to remind ourselves how valuable and appreciated all of our secretaries (and custodians) are; the women and men whose time, skills and commitment make the engines of our departments, schools and districts run. Thank them, often – they are most deserving of our gratitude.

Michael Dunn, Superintendent

Looking for inspiration? We know where to turn

NEWESD 101 recently completed an eight-part video series profiling some of the region's outstanding teachers. The series features Linda Carney, Spokane; Dave Gamon, Mead; Tim Larson, Odessa; Jim Loucks, West Valley; Alecia McAdams-Sing, Nine Mile Falls; Monte Syrie, Cheney; Kathi Tribby-Moore, NEWESD 101; and Jeff Wehr, Odessa.

If you are looking for inspiration, or further evidence of the good work taking place in public school classrooms, go to <https://www.youtube.com/user/NEWESD101> and scroll to "Created playlists" to see the individual videos.



Kathi Tribby-Moore

Focus is published during the academic year by the Superintendent of NorthEast Washington Educational Service District 101. Focus is published to provide current information about NEWESD 101-sponsored and co-sponsored programs and issues of educational significance to staff in the 59 public school districts and 45 state-approved private schools receiving administrative and instructional support services from NEWESD 101.

Comments, questions or suggestions should be sent to the editor, NEWESD 101, 4202 S. Regal St., Spokane, WA 99223, (509) 789-3540.

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Deb Kowalkowski

Deb Kowalkowski lives for “aha” moments – those magical moments of discovery when the light clicks on; when new learning takes root.

In the last three years, she has seen – and been the catalyst for – countless teacher aha moments. As NEWESD 101’s regional math coordinator, she runs the point on coordinating professional learning for 59 districts. It’s a two-pronged job that includes both content knowledge and the craft of teaching.

Her networking ability is an added bonus. Two years ago, Kowalkowski attended a workshop in California hosted by Stanford University’s renowned Jo Boaler, a mathematics professor and one of the nation’s most respected authorities on education reform and equitable mathematics classrooms.

After the presentation, while others exited through the back of the room, Kowalkowski walked forward. She approached Dr. Boaler and said, “I work for 59 districts in Washington state.”

To make a long story short, that introduction led to Boaler coming to Spokane for a regional workshop and NEWESD 101 securing a Stanford Affiliate program, one of only four in the nation and a professional relationship that continues today (next Boaler workshop Nov. 3).

While NEWESD 101 is by no means unique among ESDs nationally in offering regional math services, its connection to Stanford has provided an inside track to some of the most creative people and methods in all of higher education.

An August workshop featuring another national figure (and Stanford graduate), Dr. Cathy Humphreys, drew 75 teachers to NEWESD for a two-day session on “Number Talks,” an instructional approach cultivating the visual nature of mathematics and building number sense through critical thinking more than steps and procedures.

Inspired by Dr. Boaler, and neuroscience on how the brain processes information, Kowalkowski’s mission is to provide teachers a connection to the latest research on learning, opening up mathematics to more creative, inspiring ways to teach.

“Math is bigger than calculations,” says Kowalkowski. “It’s about reasoning, connections and communication. In the past, math was too often one-dimensional; too focused on memorization and procedure; on ‘answer-getting.’”

No more. Today, with research grounded in neuroscience, more aha moments are being counted every day. Thank you, Deb, for walking forward while others walked back.



Megan Bale

Thomas Wolfe wasn’t entirely right in his 1940 literary classic, *You Can’t Go Home Again*.

In fact, you can go home again. Just ask Megan Bale. Over the summer, the Spokane native returned home to take a position as regional literacy coordinator at NEWESD 101. And in this instance, when we say home, we don’t just mean

back to the old hometown. For Bale, landing at NEWESD 101 means returning to her childhood neighborhood.

From her new office, she can walk two blocks to the grounds of her old high school (Ferris), seven blocks to her old elementary school (Hamblen) and a mile to her former middle school (Chase).

It has been 13 years since Bale last visited these places as a K-12 student. While her return has a certain “Back to the Future” feel, she clearly returns as a very different person from the 18-year-old who graduated from Ferris in 2004.

To start, she returns with bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Washington, where she will also complete a doctorate in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies next year.

She also returns with considerable work experience that includes five years as a special education teacher and assessment manager for Seattle Public Schools.

And last, but certainly not least, she returns with a family – husband Jacob, also a Chase and Ferris alum, and a one-year-old son, Elliott. Yes, she says, it feels good to be home. There won’t be much time for reminiscing, however. Bale is eager to jump into work.

As regional literacy coordinator, her duties will focus on state initiatives in English Language Arts (ELA), including professional learning for all 59 regional districts and coordination of the regional ELA Fellows Network, a group of instructional leaders convened by OSPI to support district implementation of state standards.

True to her roots in special education, Bale says she relishes the opportunity to work with local districts committed to the success of all students, including those who need advocates or have ever felt marginalized.

Her enthusiasm is infectious. The region’s 59 districts – and the old neighborhood – are already feeling a jolt of energy. All are grateful she is home again.

‘Snapshots’ continued, next page



Martha Lagerstrom

Martha Lagerstrom grew up in Los Angeles County in a beautiful rural setting in the shadow of the San Gabriel Mountains.

Los Angeles and rural in the same sentence?

Yes, that's correct. Lagerstrom grew up in Palmdale, CA., then a town of about 10,000 people an hour north of downtown Los Angeles. In those days, California's less populated high desert communities were perhaps more like Eastern Washington than downtown LA.

Thus, the transition to Eastern Washington was an easy one for Lagerstrom and her husband Eric when they migrated north in the early 1980s. They found a perfect fit in the people, lifestyle and recreational opportunities that awaited them in Spokane.

So did sons Brian and Brett, who flourished in Spokane schools before moving on to college and careers.

While Martha and Eric are empty-nesters today, they still enjoy outdoor adventure and, in Martha's recent case, new professional horizons as well.

Three months ago, she joined the team at NEWESD 101 as an accounting assistant/secretary whose duties include accounts payable, contracts and workers' compensation.

She joined the team following six years in the payroll office at the Community Colleges of Spokane.

Just like her initial move to Spokane, the transition to NEWESD 101 has been a perfect fit, she says. She enjoys the people and their professionalism, the variety of work and the opportunity to serve the region's schools.

The feeling is mutual with her new co-workers, who have welcomed not only a multi-dimensional performer, but a go-to, in-house software adviser (soon to receive Microsoft Office user specialist certification).

While far removed from her beautiful views of the snowy San Gabriels, Lagerstrom says she has traded up for beautiful views of snowy Mount Spokane.

Call it an excellent trade that has worked out well on many levels, for many people, for many years. NEWESD 101 is now added to the list of beneficiaries.



Chuck Stoker named to NEWESD 101 Board

NEWESD 101 is pleased to announce the appointment of Chuck Stoker to its Board of Directors. He was sworn in August 15, replacing Lynn Trantow, who relocated outside the area.

Stoker is one of the region's most respected educators, logging experience that includes 23 years as a teacher and administrator in the Central Valley School District, four years as superintendent of the Freeman School District and seven years as East Valley superintendent.

More than an educator, Stoker also is well known for his community service. Following his retirement from East Valley in 1998, he worked 11 years in community relations for Inland Power and Light. In 2011, his decades of volunteerism earned him Citizen of the Year honors from the Greater Spokane Valley Chamber of Commerce.

He still remains active, serving on myriad boards including the HUB Sports Center and Valley Hospital. He also was a founding member of the Northeast Washington Education Council, NEWESD 101's non-profit affiliate. Welcome, Chuck.

Picnic tables tell a deeper story

What do picnic tables have to do with making a living? The answer is "everything" if you are a student interested in construction.

Indeed, the building of a sturdy wood table could be a life-changing event for a young person still exploring interests and skills and unsure of future directions.

Over the summer, NEWESD 101 joined with Associated General Contractors (AGC) and the Spokane County Juvenile Court in developing a first-of-its-kind summer training program for court-involved youth interested in construction.

The three-week program, based at NEWESD 101's YouthBuild training site, introduced students to all aspects of construction, including job safety and first aid, use of power tools, hands-on experience (building picnic tables for local non-profits), and concluding with workshops on resume writing, job interviews and financial literacy.

Shawn Kingsbury from AGC and Spencer Koonz from Juvenile Court directed the program, with workshop assistance provided by the Next Generation Zone (Spokane's one-stop education and career training center staffed, in part, by NEWESD 101) and Inland Northwest Bank.



Measure twice; cut once: Shawn Kingsbury, second from left, and Spencer Koonz, far right, directed the successful pilot program introducing students to construction trades.

While the finished products may have looked like handsome picnic tables, they were actually designed as doorways to a brighter tomorrow.