

**WE EXPECT EXCELLENCE****WE INNOVATE****WE EMBRACE EQUITY****WE COLLABORATE**

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**RECOGNITION OF STUDENTS, STAFF AND COMMUNITY****POLICY ISSUE/SITUATION**

Tonight, the District recognizes the following individuals for their outstanding achievements and contributions to the Beaverton School District and the community. The following recognitions exemplify a few of the four Pillars of Learning – Collaboration, Excellence, Equity and Innovation.

**BACKGROUND INFORMATION:****WE Expect Excellence: We have the best teachers: Flag of Learning and Liberty – Carolyn Ritacco**

In honor of her 36 years of dedication to the children of the Beaverton School District, Carolyn Ritacco is being awarded the Flag of Learning and Liberty, which symbolizes the fundamental interdependency of public education and the democratic way of life enjoyed in the United States of America.

Carolyn began her career in 1977 as a Vocal Music teacher. She has taught at Hiteon, Cooper Mountain and Hazeldale elementary schools, and for the last 32 years at Bethany Elementary School. "Bethany has been my family," says Mrs. Ritacco. She estimates she has taught and influenced over 20,000 students during her tenure.

"Through her gift of teaching music, Carolyn has impacted the lives of countless students. For over 35 years, she has gone above the call of duty by giving freely of her time and energy for hours each week beyond the regular workday. It is an honor to know Carolyn and I know I speak for the Bethany community when I say all will miss her. I wish Carolyn all the best in her retirement!" says Bethany Elementary Principal, Rafael Montelongo.

The Flag of Liberty & Learning has become an important reminder to all communities that education serves as a driving force in advancing freedom and liberty in our democratic society. Congratulations, Carolyn!

**WE Embrace Equity: Early College High School**

Early College High School (ECHS) is a program designed for students in the Beaverton School District who are first generation college students, who do not find traditional high school to be a good fit socially or educationally, or who just feel that there is "something more" for them in their education.

Students take college-level courses and earn both high school and college credit. They attend PCC full time for six terms, and can simultaneously earn their high school diploma, an Associate's Degree or up to two years of college credit in their career pathway.

Students in the Early College High School program are required to take three courses taught by ECHS instructors. *College Success and Survival* and *College Study Skills* provide ECHS students' college success skills like personal responsibility, self-motivation and interdependence along with study skills. *Career and Life Planning* offers students the opportunity to explore their interests and passions.

*The Beaverton School District recognizes the diversity and worth of all individuals and groups. It is the policy of the Beaverton School District that there will be no discrimination or harassment of individuals or groups based on race, color, religion, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, national origin, marital status, age, veterans' status, genetic information or disability in any educational programs, activities or employment.*

"Part of the cost of college is not only success, you have to be willing to develop a vision for your life," says Jim Lekas, Instructor, Student Advisor. "These courses really begins to put some traction to their college dreams."

**Who are Early College High School students?** Currently, there are 250 students enrolled in the program at the Rock Creek and Sylvania campuses. Of those, 46% are from poverty, 45% are first generation college students, 34% are bilingual, and 6% are homeless. The average incoming GPA is 2.34.

**Are they college ready?** 98% of ECHS students earn a high school diploma; their average PCC GPA is 3.0. On average, ECHS students earn 70+ hours of transferrable college credit, and 35% are on the PCC Honor Roll.

The mission of Early College High School is to provide all students, particularly those who are under-represented, the opportunity to complete a high school diploma, earn college credit and develop both a vision and a specific plan to create the life they want to live.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

It is recommended that the School Board recognize Carolyn Ritacco and Early College High School for their contributions to student success.