

**For Immediate Release**

Terren Roloff, Director  
Community Relations  
Phone: 354-7338  
terrenr@spokaneschools.org



## **Raikes grant aims to smooth middle school transition**

The Raikes Foundation recently awarded Spokane Public Schools a \$150,000 grant – potentially renewable for another two years for a total of \$450,000 – to develop a transition plan for students moving from sixth to seventh grade.

The grant will be used to implement effective transition strategies for Shaw and Garry middle schools’ feeder schools – Bemiss, Cooper, Logan, Regal, Stevens, Arlington, Lidgerwood, Linwood, Longfellow, Madison, Whitman and Willard elementaries.

While officials are only in the fact-finding stages, they expect the plan to include such strategies as personalizing the registration process, increasing parent involvement and providing more opportunities for sixth graders to visit middle schools. Social/emotional supports will be a key focus as well, with an aim to help students feel they are part of a school community.

The grant’s “Theory of Action” states that the “smoother and more aligned the transition processes are, the more successful the students will be.”

“We are so pleased with the possibilities this grant represents, as it so tightly aligns with both college- and career-readiness initiatives for our students, as well as middle school success,” said SPS Superintendent Nancy Stowell.

“We are delighted that the Raikes Foundation is strategically aligning with Spokane Public Schools to enhance our students’ experiences,” said Mark Hurtubise, president and CEO of the Inland Northwest Community Foundation. “This will contribute significantly to our unified efforts as a community to improve our high school graduation rates.”

Based in Seattle, the Raikes Foundation provides opportunities and support during adolescence to help young people become healthy, contributing adults.

“Research clearly shows that many young students struggle with the transition from elementary school to middle school. We hope this grant will address the academic slide that typically happens and help students adjust quickly to the academic rigors and social complexities of middle school,” said Erin Kahn, director of the Foundation. The Foundation awarded similar grants to Kent School District and Tacoma School District.