



Bob Butts

ELAC Representation: Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction

Occupation: Assistant Superintendent of Early Learning

City/Region: Olympia, WA

Getting to know YOU:

What drew you to early learning?

I have worked in the area of education policy and program implementation for more than 20 years. Based on the research I have encountered and the programs that I have implemented that were not extremely effective, I've concluded that the best way to provide an opportunity for students to succeed is in the early years. By the time students are in middle or high school, if a solid foundation has not been laid, there are significantly fewer opportunities to make a difference. Washington's constitution and "Basic Education Act" are clear that we are to provide students an "opportunity" to meet and exceed the state learning goals. In my view, the very best time to provide this opportunity is in the early years before they enter kindergarten and in the first several grades.

How do you hope to influence a stronger early learning system for Washington?

As a result of my experiences working in many areas of education, I think that I now know how systems work, how to play well with others (at least, much of the time), and how to identify a small handful of priorities and work to achieve them. I'm hoping these skills will help me work with other members of ELAC and the early learning and K-12 community to make a difference for our earliest learners.

What was your first job?

My first job was as a paperboy for the Tacoma News Tribune when I was eleven. To have a paper route, you needed to be twelve years old, so I had my older brother sign-up for the route and I did the work. It all went well until a customer asked me to sign a receipt for payment, and I told him I could not because it was not my route. After a pause, I signed it anyway.

What is your favorite childhood memory?

When I was four-years old, my family lived in Okinawa. For vacations we went to a beautiful beach that was strewn with fabulous seashells and had picture-perfect blue-green water. It was paradise.