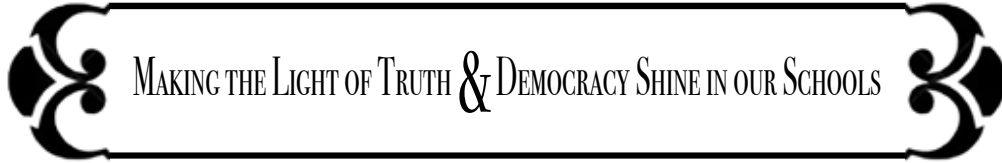


# WASHINGTON'S STUDENT PRESS



---

## 2024 Write-Off Contest Rules and Guidelines

---



**Arlington High School**  
**March 9, 2024**

Washington Journalism Education Association  
PO Box 24389 Seattle, WA 98124  
206.979.3234  
[executivedirector@wjea.org](mailto:executivedirector@wjea.org)  
[www.wjea.org](http://www.wjea.org)

# Schedule & Contest Rule Changes This Year

## Schedule Shift for 2024

### Morning Keynote Panel

The keynote moves to 9 a.m. and doubles as the write-off presentation for all onsite contests. The keynote will be a panel discussion with professional journalists on a current controversial media topic. Write-off contestants may take notes and ask questions during the keynote.

### Post-Keynote

Write-off contestants will move to a computer lab, where they will have up to 70 minutes to write or draw. Advance-submission contestants will move to a classroom for a critique session. All other attendees will attend a small-group discussion with a professional journalist.

### PM Sessions

After lunch, all attendees will attend two learning sessions (from a menu of options) before the final awards ceremony.

## Contest Changes for 2024

**Advance Submissions Open Statewide:** Conference attendance is no longer required for students submitting entries in the ADVANCE contests (layout, photo, video & audio), which are due Feb. 15. Out-of-area students will be offered a Zoom link to the critique sessions and the awards ceremony.

**Omitted Onsite Contests:** Sports Feature Writing, Review Writing, Copy Editing

**Omitted Advance Contests:** Journalism Online/News Website (plus News & Yearbook Photography Contests and Video Contest no longer offer separate subcategories)

**New Advance Contest:** Team Project

**Eligibility. Sign up students for all contests at <https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> by Feb. 15.** Advisers must be WJEA members for a student to be eligible. Only one student per school per category may be entered in a competition, with the exception of pairs entering the Layout contests or groups entering the Video & Audio contests.

**Fees.** Contest fees are in addition to the registration fees and are non-refundable. No new contest registrations will be accepted on site. Students who enter advance-submission contests but cannot attend the conference need only pay the contest registration fee, not the conference fee.

**Substitutions.** Names may be substituted in categories for which your school has already registered. Late registrants may not enter advance entry contests.

**JEA Compatibility.** Some students will attend the JEA national conventions and compete in the write-offs there. Do NOT assume that JEA's rules are the same as WJEA's. Consult these WJEA rules very closely.



# CATEGORY 01: NEWS WRITING

## HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a keynote panel on a newsworthy topic that will last no more than an hour, including a question-and-answer period. You will then move to a computer lab, where you will write a news story according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will cover the event as if it were being posted to a school newspaper website to sum up the event the same day. You will have 70 minutes to type the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

News writing style; the inverted pyramid structure; a strong lead that engages readers and summarizes key news; use of facts instead of generalizations; avoidance of subjective commentary from the reporter; use of direct quotes; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

## MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop computer, fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

## MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Writing utensils and paper/notebook for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook, phone or other electronics for reference and/or recording. **NOTE: You may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

REMEMBER: Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

## DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

## DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



# CATEGORY 02: EDITORIAL WRITING

## HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a keynote panel on a newsworthy topic that will last no more than an hour, including a question-and-answer period. You will then move to a computer lab, where you will write an editorial according to the instructions given by the moderator. Write as if the editorial were being published in a school newspaper or website. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words..

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Leads that come quickly to an assertion; focus on a single, manageable proposition; editorial format for lead, body and conclusion; opposing arguments weighed carefully and refuted; facts to support assertion in the lead; arguments fully developed; strong conclusion; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

**Remember that this should be written in the style of a staff editorial -- not as a personal column.**

## MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop computer, fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

## MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Writing utensils and paper/notebook for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook, phone or other electronics for reference and/or recording. **NOTE: You may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

**REMEMBER:** Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

## DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

## DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



# CATEGORY 03: NEWSPAPER FEATURE WRITING

# CATEGORY 04: YEARBOOK FEATURE WRITING

## HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a keynote panel on a newsworthy topic that will last no more than an hour, including a question-and-answer period. You will then move to a computer lab, where you will write a feature story according to the instructions given by the moderator. You will write the story as if it were being published in a school newspaper, website, or yearbook. You will have 70 minutes to type and complete the final entry. The final copy should not exceed 350 words.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Attention-grabbing lead; feature style as opposed to breaking-news style; colorful details; use of direct quotes and anecdotes with substance; copy that appeals to the readers' interest; emotional impact of copy; avoidance of subjective commentary from the reporter; accuracy; completeness; elimination of extraneous material; elimination of libelous or privacy-invading statements; use of AP style; skills in areas of grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, etc.

## MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Laptop or desktop computer, fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet.

## MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

OPTIONAL: Writing utensils and paper/notebook for taking notes; print dictionary/thesaurus, print AP Stylebook, phone or other electronics for reference and/or recording. **NOTE: You may use any online resources as well as the recorder on your phone as long as you bring earbuds.**

**REMEMBER:** Stay in the room during the contest until your work is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

## DO...

- type your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- use AP journalistic style for copy editing, grammar, capitalization, etc.;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

## DO NOT...

- type your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have submitted your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



# CATEGORY 05: EDITORIAL CARTOONING

## HOW IT WORKS

You will listen to a keynote panel on a newsworthy topic that will last no more than an hour, including a question-and-answer period. You will then move to a classroom, where you will draw an editorial cartoon according to the instructions given by the moderator, taking a position on the topic. You will have 70 minutes of designing and drawing time to complete the final entry.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

A simple and clear editorial statement; evidence of artistic ability; a novel approach; absence of trite and melodramatic imagery; wit; effective conveyance of a message to a student audience; quality of drawing; simplicity of line.

## MATERIALS WJEA WILL PROVIDE

Fact sheet, assignment sheet, rule sheet, final copy cover sheet, blank paper for drawing, paper clips or stapler.

## MATERIALS YOU, THE CONTESTANT, MIGHT BRING

Drawing tools such as pencil and eraser, black pen and white-out, rulers, scratch paper, print dictionary/thesaurus, etc. **You may use your phone for reference or as a recorder as long as you bring earbuds.**

**REMEMBER:** Stay in the room during the contest until entry is submitted. No contestant will be given additional time, regardless of the state the work is in at that time.

## DO...

- write your contestant number on each page of your entry;
- write legibly and correct errors VERY neatly and clearly;
- prepare entries according to fact sheet and instructions given by the moderator;
- ask the moderator any questions;

## DO NOT...

- write your name or your school's name on your entry;
- leave the room until you have turned in your entry;
- consume food or drink;
- talk to other contestants.



# CATEGORY 06: NEWSPAPER / NEWSMAGAZINE LAYOUT

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 15**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

## HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for layouts and page designs that are completed on any topic in the normal course of newspaper production since the previous WJEA conference. Contestant(s) will submit PDF in advance and should attend (in-person or on Zoom) the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with a judge. Page design may be double or single page. If double, should be saved as a single PDF. Publication of layout is recommended but not required for entry. Submitted layout will not be checked against published versions, so students are welcome to edit previously published design before submitting. 1-2 students may be associated with the submitted layout.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Impact of photos; using a dominant element; positioning of headlines, copy blocks and captions; using current design trends; adhering to design rules; using appropriate point sizes for copy, headlines and captions; effectively balancing photos and copy blocks; using creative graphics; effective cropping.

## SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give your PDF entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#

WJEA has assigned your school a number to use for the contests (see appendix on the last page of this PDF). If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). For example, Mount Si's assigned number is 54. If so, the submission filename for this contest from the Mount Si contestant should be 06-54.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

Be sure that the adviser has added the contestant name(s) to this sign-up form:

<https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> THEN, submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 15, 2024, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for NP layout entries:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/14meKTOWteFqNXNaxN8M> Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session in person or remotely during the conference.

To create the best possible PDF of your design, it would be best practice to follow the instructions provided by JEA.org, Preparing Your Layouts for Submission, at

<http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/preparing-layout-entries/>



# CATEGORY 07: YEARBOOK LAYOUT

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 15**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

## HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for layouts and page designs that are completed on any topic in the normal course of yearbook production since the previous WJEA conference. Contestant(s) will submit PDF in advance and should attend (in-person or on Zoom) the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique with a judge. Page design may be double or single page. If double, should be saved as a single PDF. Publication of layout is not required for entry. Submitted layout will not be checked against published versions, so students are welcome to edit previously published design before submitting. 1-2 students may be associated with the submitted layout.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Impact of photos; using a dominant element; positioning of headlines, copy blocks and captions; using current design trends; adhering to design rules; using appropriate point sizes for copy, headlines and captions; effectively balancing photos and copy blocks; using creative graphics; effective cropping.

## SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give your PDF entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#

WJEA has assigned your school a number to use for the contests (see appendix on the last page of this PDF). If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). For example, Mount Si's assigned number is 54. If so, the submission filename for this contest from the Mount Si contestant should be 07-54.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

Be sure that the adviser has added the contestant name(s) to this sign-up form:

<https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> THEN, submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 15, 2024, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for layout entries:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/1BdQvI30oxZIPPoaraRG> Please remember that the contestant should attend the critique session in person or remotely during the conference.

To create the best possible PDF of your design, it would be best practice to follow the instructions provided by JEA.org, Preparing Your Layouts for Submission, at

<http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/preparing-layout-entries/>





# CATEGORY 08: NEWSPAPER/ NEWSMAG/ ONLINE NEWS PHOTOGRAPHY

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 15**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

## HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for any photography – **sports included!** – that is completed in the normal course of newspaper or newsmagazine or online news production. The contestant from each school will provide up to THREE examples of their best work. Any subjects relevant to student journalism are acceptable. It is suggested the three photos display a variety of content. Photos may be color or black-and-white or a combination. Contestants will submit digital images in advance and attend the 70-minute-or-less small-group critique. Publication of photographs is recommended but not required for entry.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Variety and imagination in subject matter; appropriateness; imaginative points of view and angles; effective lighting; focus and contrast; a focal point; good composition; visual impact; evidence of overall photographic excellence.

## PREPARING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SUBMISSION

Submit images as JPEGs in either RGB color or Grayscale for black-and-white. Best practice would be to follow national JEA guidelines, though this is not required. JEA offers excellent instructions for formatting images for contests, including the addition of metadata, which allows for a caption:

<http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/write-contests-instructions-online-submission-photos/>

## SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give each JPEG entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#-ENTRYLETTER (a,b or c for each of up to 3 entries)]

WJEA has assigned your school a number to use for the contests (see appendix on the last page of this PDF). If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). Add the letter of the entry (we allow up to 3 entries per contestant for each photo contest, so you'll add a, b or c to the end of each filename). For example, Mount Si's number is 54. If so, the second newspaper photo submission from the Mount Si contestant would be named 08-54-b.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

Be sure that the adviser has added the contestant name(s) to this sign-up form:

<https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> THEN, submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 15, 2024,, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for Newspaper-Newsmag Photo entries:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/NI75nOfunDJFksqYf3Ak>



# CATEGORY 09: YEARBOOK PHOTOGRAPHY

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 15**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

## HOW IT WORKS

This is a contest for any photography – **sports included!** – that is completed in the normal course of yearbook production. The contestant from each school will provide up to THREE examples of their best work. Any subjects relevant to student journalism are acceptable. It is suggested the three photos display a variety of content. Photos may be color or black-and-white or a combination. Contestants will submit digital images in advance and should attend the 70-minute-or-less (in person or via Zoom) small-group critique. Publication of photographs is not required for entry.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

Variety and imagination in subject matter; appropriateness; imaginative points of view and angles; effective lighting; focus and contrast; a focal point; good composition; visual impact; evidence of overall photographic excellence.

## PREPARING PHOTOGRAPHS FOR SUBMISSION

Submit images as JPEGs in either RGB color or Grayscale for black-and-white. Best practice would be to follow national JEA guidelines, though this is not required. JEA offers excellent instructions for formatting images for contests, including the addition of metadata, which allows for a caption:

<http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/write-contests-instructions-online-submission-photos/>

## SUBMISSION FILENAMES

Most important is to give each JPEG entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL#-ENTRYLETTER (a,b or c for each of up to 3 entries)]

WJEA has assigned your school a number to use for the contests (see appendix on the last page of this PDF). If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). Add the letter of the entry (we allow up to 3 entries per contestant for each photo contest, so you'll add a, b or c to the end of each filename). For example, Mount Si's number is 54. If so, the second yearbook photo submission from the Mount Si contestant would be named 09-54-b.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

Be sure that the adviser has added the contestant name(s) to this sign-up form:

<https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> THEN, submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 15, 2024, to this Dropbox File Request link designed for Yearbook Photo entries:

<https://www.dropbox.com/request/IN79WSSObNP5B3DlidvW>



# CATEGORY 10: VIDEO REPORTING & CATEGORY 11: AUDIO (PODCAST)

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 15**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

Links are **due Feb. 15** in the Contest Registration Form at <https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24>

All entries should have been broadcast at school or in the community from March 2023 until February 2024. All entries must have been produced by students and originally broadcast or disseminated through a campus student medium. Submit only one entry for each contest, but you may name up to four students who worked on the broadcast for the award. It is acceptable for these students to also compete in an individual onsite or advanced submission contest.

For **Video Reporting**, submit a URL linking to one pre-recorded news story containing (usually) a reporter's voiceover, videotaped shots and sound bites, with a total running time of 1:30 to 2:00 minutes.

For **Audio Podcast**, submit a URL linking to one prerecorded podcast story on a timely topic that is appropriate for your audience. For example, this may be a profile, information to raise awareness on an issue, or commentary. Must include at least one outside source and voice other than the moderator. Total running time should be 5:00 to 15:00 minutes.

# CATEGORY 12: TEAM PROJECT

**ADVANCE SUBMISSION – DUE FEB. 23**

**New: Any WA state student may submit; in-person attendance not required.**

**THE CONCEPT:** Your team will create a two-page spread or multimedia web story package which answers the following question: How do the people in your school and community serve the places where they live? What are the problems, and what are the ways people in the community are identifying and working to find solutions? Focus on strong local journalism that focuses on important or under-examined issues your communities face. Your story package will have the opportunity to be published on the WJEA blog and beyond.

**HOW IT WORKS:** Students will work as a team of up to four students. The team will create an online multimedia news package or two-page spread for posting to their own school's news website or publishing in print publications. The comprehensive online news package/podcast/broadcast or spread should include a main story with photo(s) that are captioned and credited, and two or more of these or similar elements: audio, infographics, interactive reader feature, links to related information, pull quotes, sidebar, slideshow, social media coverage, video (b-roll/nat sound), video story package. If doing a spread, it may include a QR code or interactive element that takes your reader beyond the page.

## WHAT THE JUDGES WANT TO SEE

**Overall Content:** Overall package provides comprehensive look at an issue that members of your community are tackling; It goes beyond the text to enhance reader's experience; video/audio is used for impact and enhances story content; each element is captioned and credited as needed; package includes multiple layers of coverage beyond just text and photos; use of elements beyond the main story (photos, videos, pull-quotes, polls, etc.) that promote/enhance story content and prevent long blocks of text.

**Broadcast Conventions:** Steady camera work; editing free of glitches, jump cuts; interesting, focused and varied shots; sequencing is logical; video/audio is good quality following appropriate broadcast conventions (b-roll, interviews, sound quality, lighting, framing); general broadcast style evident (short sentences, present tense, conversational tone).

**General Conventions:** Written material follows AP style; contains few convention errors (spelling/grammar); copy focuses on a clear, interesting, central, specific angle; copy illustrates overall mastery of journalistic writing (accuracy, balance, clarity/conciseness, objectivity and timeliness); copy effectively considers audience interest; answers all important five W's and H.

**Package Presentation:** Content is accessible and easy to navigate; text formatted with no large blank spaces, missing paragraph breaks, strange fonts, odd symbols, etc.; photos display at a proper resolution & proportion, are not oddly cropped and do not show up in the story more than once.

## HOW TO SUBMIT

### IF ONLINE OR BROADCAST

Links are **due Feb. 23** via email to [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). Please use the subject line "team submission."

### IF PRINT SPREAD (PDF)

Most important is to give your PDF entry a numeric filename according to this formula: CONTEST#-SCHOOL# WJEA has assigned your school a number to use for the contests (see appendix on the last page of this PDF). If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com). For example, Mount Si's assigned number is 54. If so, the submission filename for this contest from the Mount Si contestant should be 12-54.

To create the best possible PDF, you might follow the instructions provided by JEA.org, Preparing Your Layouts for Submission, at <http://jea.org/wp/home/awards-honors/write-off-contests/preparing-layout-entries/>

Be sure that the adviser has added the contestant name(s) to this sign-up form: <https://bit.ly/wjeacontests24> THEN, submit your entry or entries by midnight on Feb. 23, 2024, to this Dropbox File Request link: <https://www.dropbox.com/request/NcMVeh8NRXYDDc2ZqV0v>



# APPENDIX: WJEA member school numbers

*You'll need this number for advance-submission entry filenames. If your school is not listed, please email [wjeabox@gmail.com](mailto:wjeabox@gmail.com).*

01	Anacortes High School	40	J.R. Rogers High School
02	Arlington High School	41	Jenkins Jr/Sr High
03	Auburn Adventist Academy	42	Kamiakin High School
04	Auburn High School	43	Lake Roosevelt Jr/Sr High
05	Auburn Mountainview HS	44	Lake Washington High School
06	Ballard High School	45	Lakeside Middle School
07	Bellarmino Prep School	46	Lakeside School
08	Bellingham HS	47	Liberty High School
09	Bethel High School	48	Lindbergh High School
10	Brier Terrace Middle School	49	Marysville Getchell High School
11	Capital High School	50	Marysville Pilchuck High School
12	Cascade High School	51	Mead High School
13	Central Kitsap High School	52	Mercer Island High School
14	Central Valley High School	53	Mount Baker Middle School
15	Centralia High School	54	Mount Si High School
16	Chief Kitsap High School	55	Mount Spokane High School
17	College Place High School	56	Mountlake Terrace High School
18	College Place Middle School	57	Nathan Hale High School
19	Concordia Christian Academy	58	North Creek High School
20	Deer Park High School	59	North Thurston High School
21	East Valley High School	60	Olympia High School
22	Eastlake High School	61	Puyallup High School
23	Ellensburg High School	62	Renton High School
24	Emerald Ridge HS	63	Roosevelt High School
25	Enumclaw High School	64	Rosalia HS
26	Ephrata High School	65	Seattle Preparatory School
27	Ferris High School	66	Sedro-Woolley High School
28	Freeman High School	67	Shorewood High School
29	Garfield High School	68	South Kitsap High School
30	Gibson Ek High School	69	Squalicum HS
31	Glacier Peak High School	70	Stanwood High School
32	Grace Academy	71	Steilacoom High School
33	Grandview High School	72	Timberline High School
34	Granite Falls High School	73	Todd Beamer High School
35	Hanford High School	74	University Prep
36	Hazen High School	75	Walker High School
37	Henry M. Jackson High School	76	Wenatchee High School
38	Highline High School	77	West Seattle High School
39	Inglemoor High School	78	Woodinville High School