

SENATE RESOLUTION  
8661

By Senators King, Eide, Delvin, Holmquist, McAuliffe, Honeyford, Brown, and Franklin

WHEREAS, Benjamin A. Soria is retiring after nine years of dedicated and exemplary service as superintendent of the Yakima School District and twenty-one years of service to our state; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria served in large urban school districts in California and New Mexico before coming to Washington and serving twelve years as deputy superintendent of the Tacoma School District; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria took a mid-career break to work in private enterprise for ten years in Oakland, California, as vice president and chief administrative officer for BCTV, Inc., producing bilingual education programs for children and gaining experience which would serve him well as a member of the education community; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria became superintendent of the Yakima School District in 2000 with more than twenty years of successful school administration experience; and

WHEREAS, In the year prior to Ben Soria's arrival fewer than forty percent of fourth graders in Yakima schools met the reading standard on the Washington Assessment of Student Learning, but now the standard is met by more than sixty-five percent; and

WHEREAS, During Ben Soria's time as superintendent the Yakima School District's dropout rate fell from a high of twenty-one percent to six percent, barely more than the state average; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria, who emigrated from Nogales, Veracruz, Mexico with his family to the state of Kansas when he was nine years old, has been an advocate for young Latinos, especially those who don't speak English; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria has been a leader in establishing the Ready by Five early learning initiative, supported by the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, and has worked to educate state lawmakers about the needs of students from low-income homes and who are Spanish speakers; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria was named by the Washington Association of School Administrators as "Most Effective Administrator" for large school districts in 2002-03 and Superintendent of the Year for 2006 and was one of four finalists for 2006 National Superintendent of the Year; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria received the prestigious Eugene T. Carothers Human Relations Award from the National School Public Relations Association in 2007 for his passion and dedication to creating opportunities and eliminating barriers for all students; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria's leadership has resulted in the Yakima School District receiving national recognition; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria's dedication, as a native Mexican, to open doors abroad so that future generations of Mexicans can find a better path recently earned him the Ohtli Award from the Consulate of Mexico; and

WHEREAS, Ben Soria and his wife Kathy plan to remain in the Yakima area after his retirement begins July 1st;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the Washington State Senate recognize Ben Soria for his service to the students and families of the Yakima School District, his efforts on behalf of Latino students, and his contributions to K-12 education in Washington; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That copies of this resolution be immediately transmitted by the Secretary of the Senate to the Soria family, the Yakima School District Board of Directors, the Washington Association of School Administrators, and the Consulate of Mexico in Seattle.

I, Thomas Hoemann, Secretary of the Senate,  
do hereby certify that this is a true and  
correct copy of Senate Resolution 8661,  
adopted by the Senate  
April 20, 2009

THOMAS HOEMANN  
Secretary of the Senate