

Virginia (Hills) Preston

City and state: Tacoma, WA

High school attended: Clover Park High School

Graduation year: 1986

Colleges attended/degrees earned:

- Associates in Applied Science degree, Pierce College
- Bachelor of Arts in recreation and environmental education, Western Washington University



Current career/job:

Supervisor of Training and Safety, Clover Park School District

Describe your current career/job:

I train and focus on the safety aspects of school bus drivers for Clover Park School District's transportation department.

Describe the path you took from high school graduation to where you are today:

When I graduated from CP I had no real thoughts on what I wanted to do. Pierce College lead to Western. From there, I moved to Georgia to teach environmental education for three years before moving home to work in a day care before being hired into my current position with CPSD.

How did your experiences in Clover Park School District help prepare you for this path?

They gave me a great base of knowledge and skills to allow me to do whatever I set my mind to. In the positions I have had, I always started at the ground floor and moved into management. Having a degree has helped open doors.

Who was the most influential teacher or administrator to you as a student in the district? Why?

Mr. David Emery. I worked and swam at the pool and he taught me great work ethic—be on time, come prepared to do my job or workout, treat others with respect and do the best job possible.

What was the most valuable thing you learned while attending school in Clover Park School District?

That even though I might not like everyone or be best friends with them, I would be able to get the job or assignment done if I treated everyone with respect.

Do you have any favorite memories from when you attended school in Clover Park School District?

I spent lots of time swimming and teaching at the pool. I am a people person, so those were enjoyable years. I also sold tickets at sporting events and loved talking with fellow students and the community in attendance.

What advice do you have for Clover Park School District students?

Don't ever feel like you are stuck in a job. You can always learn to do something different. Yes, it will be difficult, but if you put your all into it you can do anything you want to do. I have changed careers at least three times, always for the best.

What opportunities exist in your career sector for new graduates? Is post-secondary education required for this field?

Not necessarily, driving a school bus can be a great job while going to college and then continuing on if desired with the school district as an employee in lots of areas of expertise after earning a post-secondary degree.