

**From:** [Superintendent](#)  
**To:** [EPS.Maillist](#)  
**Subject:** Welcome Back!  
**Date:** Wednesday, September 5, 2018 1:14:09 AM  
**Attachments:** [image003.png](#)

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Good morning! And welcome back to each of you, whether you are returning after your summer break, a vacation, or just the Labor Day weekend. I'll take this opportunity to extend another very warm welcome as well to the nearly 200 new staff joining our district-wide team this year. It's no secret that our staff is growing along with the growth in student population across our district; 20,088 students are projected to enter our school doors this morning. *And we are ready!*

For those who are new to the district, each year I send a welcome back message to you. Often I include a quote I find inspiring, thank you for the wonderful work you do, and acknowledge all of the summer work that helps us get ready again for students and their families on the first day of a new school year. As I thought about what would be important to share as we start another new school year together (my tenth in Everett Public Schools), one word stands above the rest: *EACH*.

In 2005, our district's board of directors thought the word EACH was important enough to change the entire school district's culture from focusing on ALL students to focusing on EACH student. That change in one word, in our focus, in our practice, and in our values literally guided our district's work to keep students in school and to re-engage students who had dropped out of school --often one-by-one. That massive, ongoing effort contributed to raising the district's four-year graduation rate from 53 percent in 2003 to the nearly 93 percent rate we posted in 2017. That success is impossible without the remarkable effort EACH one of us contributes to our mission for students.

EACH one of us is a critical part of our team, like an anchor runner on an Olympics-worthy relay team. We pass the baton from teammate to teammate each leg of the race to fuel the momentum. While I try to avoid using too many sports metaphors, a relay team is a remarkably good metaphor for our collective effort. Whether you are working together to help a struggling student, preparing a first grader to be ready for the second grade, or saying hello to a student in the hallway so he or she knows that you see him or her – *knows that someone cares* – that teamwork and those practiced transitions are the consistent, coherent support that keeps a student headed in the right direction. EACH one of us is needed to keep this important work going for EACH of our students.

Each year you work hard to be ready for school to begin ... and in that way this year is no different. While you may feel a bit nervous about the first day, just like I did my very first day in a high school classroom 38 years ago, and just like our students do each new year, I have no doubt that you are ready. Now, remember to stretch, warm up, hydrate, grab that baton ... and really enjoy the beauty of EACH moment you touch a student's life for the better. *Together we can make school the very best part of EACH student's day.*

Warmest regards for a great new school year,

Gary



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