

**From:** Superintendent  
**Sent:** Wednesday, September 05, 2012 1:32 PM  
**To:** EPS.MailList  
**Subject:** Welcome back!  
**Importance:** High

Dear colleague,

Welcome back to school!

I had the opportunity to visit several schools on this “first day” today. Even after more than 30 years of “first days,” I feel like a “little kid” the first day and am still so very excited the night before that I can hardly sleep!

This year I’m more excited than ever because of the world of possibilities we’ve opened with our new *Learning Improvement Fridays*. In case you haven’t heard, *Learning Improvement Friday* is a 75-minute block of time on Friday afternoons specifically designated for school teams to leverage their collective knowledge, professionalism and insight to improve student learning. I believe this is a groundbreaking win-win for staff, students and families in this district. This collegial time is a significant shift from “my time” and “your time” to “our time” ... which is a new world for us.

As with any change, *Learning Improvement Fridays* will need some time to fully develop; they mark a change in how we work together. As Kim Mead, Everett Education Association president has said, “The Friday time is about trusting teachers, and it is about teachers trusting leadership. I am excited that we are trying out something that we’ve not been able to do before. We may have some bumps in the road as we learn how best to do this work, but it is assuredly a road well worth taking.”

I agree completely, and some others of you have shared similar thoughts. One elementary teacher wrote yesterday to say thanks for the time and how it, “... showed a great deal of respect, honor and trust to all Everett educators ...”

Absolutely! We are each where we are because of the work of those who came before us and those who now walk with us. As Kim said, “This is a road well worth taking!”

I’m grateful to be walking this road with you, and I am energized by the work you do each day. Thank you again for all you have done in the past and will achieve this year for students. And welcome to a bright, shiny, new school year!

Warm regards,  
Gary