

From: Superintendent
Sent: Thursday, January 03, 2013 9:17 AM
To: EPS.MailList
Subject: January happenings
Importance: High

Dear Colleague,

For most of us, January is a busy month, especially so after we've enjoyed some vacation time with the winter break. In addition to being the start of a fresh, crisp new year, each week of January is marked by an array of events and reasons to celebrate our students and their work, our work together, and one another. Here are several dates and events for our schools, that I believe you will want to note.

Celebration of Innovation on Jan. 23!

January holds one of the district's oldest events – one that is almost a quarter century old. The [Celebration of Innovation](#) taking place at Cascade High School on **Jan. 23**, from 6 – 8 p.m., will showcase educational technology as it is being used around the district for teaching and learning and daily operations. Each year staff from every school, supported by the professionals in our Instructional Technology department, “transform” the CHS gym into the largest demonstration of its kind in our district. It is one way of saying “thank you” and “look at this!” to our parents and community who have supported technology levies over the years. I look forward to seeing you at the celebration and to being wowed once again by projects and demonstrations by our students. *(To get a peek at how the CHS gym is transformed, check out the slide show from last year's set up on the [IT website](#).)*

Another chance to get healthier and more fit begins Jan. 7

Monday, Jan. 7 is also an important date for us as a district – and each of us individually. This is when registration opens for the new [Wellness Challenge](#). Wellness Coordinator Gail Buquicchio's data shows that each Wellness Challenge has drawn in more staff than the last one. The data also shows that we still have opportunity to grow in numbers and, well, in *wellness* by increasing the number of us who take advantage of this unique, school-district opportunity. Did you know that our Wellness program is the reason the district has TWICE been named by the American Heart Association as a [Gold Level Fit-Friendly Worksite](#)?

Check out the details of the newest Wellness Challenge brought to you by Gail and your Everett Public Schools Employee Benefit Trust. As with each successive Wellness Challenge, Gail has added some interesting twists to this latest round – to keep us motivated and intrigued. I encourage you to take part for either the monetary incentive or a personal sense of wellbeing – or both. You will feel better for it – I certainly do!

Remembering and safeguarding equity, all month

Martin Luther King Jr. Day is Monday, Jan. 21. In January, each of our schools will hold celebrations and commemorations to ensure that we never forget the changes the great man inspired for us and for the future. Thank you for helping to plan or support these annual celebrations and to help keep the spirit of Dr. King alive for future generations.

Helping kids and families get ready for post-high school education, all month

FAFSA workshops are scheduled throughout the county this month. If you have had students getting ready for college, you know that *FAFSA* stands for Free Application for Federal Student Aid for college. To be considered for federal and state grants, loans and scholarships at most colleges, universities and vocational/technical schools nationwide for fall of 2013, students **MUST** complete the FAFSA.

Filling out the FAFSA is no easy task, and several organizations are partnering to host FAFSA workshops in January. The first FAFSA workshop this month is Friday, Jan 7.

In addition to helping with the FAFSA events, our counselors are focused on getting EVERY high school senior to complete the FAFSA. Why? Because research shows that students who go through the FAFSA process are more likely to graduate from high school and to enroll in post-high school education than those who do not.

See the [district news release](#) for all of the details, dates, times and locations – and the number of organizations helping us ensure that more students complete the FAFSA. All that help and strategic partnership is another example of how this community supports its students, families and schools.

An added bonus at each event – chances to win \$250 scholarships! Check out that news release for the details.

Saying “thank you” to our school board members, all month – and all year

January is also **School Board Appreciation Month**. Our [school board members](#) face critical challenges in their roles as advocates for our communities’ children and educators. While we make a special effort each January to show our appreciation for what they do on our behalf, theirs is a year-round commitment. They generously give of themselves to ensure the decisions they make are focused upon what is necessary for the continued support of today’s and tomorrow’s students. Please join with me in saying “thank you” for their dedication and commitment – in January – and every month!

Washington State Legislature convenes this month

January also begins another **state legislative session**. We have already begun our work with legislators. Legislators met twice in December with members of our

school board – and with student representatives from our high school ASBs. Legislators have heard clearly – and been struck deeply – by students who spoke eloquently about the impact of being in larger-than-ever classes and seeing less support for their student peers struggling in some classes.

We don't know what the legislative session will hold; we do know the McCleary Decision presents a challenge for legislators and that there will be no quick or easy answers to funding for schools. I do promise, along with your school board and other district leaders, to be your advocate and an advocate for students and families – this year in 2013 and in the years to come.

Warm regards and best wishes for this happy new year,
Gary