

From: Superintendent
Sent: Friday, November 01, 2013 11:49 AM
To: EPS.MailList
Subject: Congratulations and thank you for High School and Beyond!

Dear Colleague:

You acted up, showed out, and made things happen!

That is the “thank you and congratulations” message many already received from Becky Ballbach last week after an extraordinarily successful *High School and Beyond!* series. Becky and a strategic core team of planners worked their magic again this year to ratchet the spirit of *High School and Beyond!* to inspire you to help make the event even more meaningful and inclusive than before.

The spirit was infectious. Everywhere I went in the weeks and days leading up to *High School and Beyond!* was *alma mater*-laden. I saw old sweatshirts, banners, mascots, proudly declared degrees, and even Homecoming invitations. Staff wore buttons inviting kids to “Ask me about (*insert name*) college.”

The “buzz” was effective, and the turnout at each of our three comprehensive high schools was larger than before. We saw more diversity and more middle and elementary families than in the past. The colleges and training institutions were ecstatic about the number of students and families they visited with – well over 3,000 attended this year. The word is out; this event is a “do not miss” if you want to recruit students to consider your institution or program as they plan for college and careers after high school.

This year’s speaker, Reggie Jones, was beyond phenomenal. His life story and messages resounded with students and adults who heard him say and demonstrate:

- Your circumstances don’t define you – YOU define you.
- Obstacles in life are like runner’s hurdles – they are meant to be jumped over on the way to the finish line.

High School and Beyond! is one of the ways you are collectively helping students and families internalize Reggie’s message. Thank you for *acting up, showing out and making things happen*, not only during the *High School and Beyond!* season, but every day in every way for students.

Warm regards,

Gary

PS -- "*Act up, show out, and make things happen,*" is the challenge Dr. Joyce Brown gave our counselors when she spent time with them in October. Formerly a counselor with Chicago Public Schools for 35 years, Dr. Brown is now in charge of the FAFSA project for the U.S. Department of Education. Everett Public Schools is a [FAFSA pilot district](#), working with the Department of Education to ensure that every student in the district fills out a FAFSA application. Students who complete that application process are more likely to take part in some post-secondary training than those who do not. FAFSA completion is one of the foundational stepping stones we have in place help each student graduate from high school.