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To: [EPS.Maillist](#)
Subject: Keeping Calm in the Wake of Tragedy
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Importance: High

Good morning. You may remember that this school year began with us sharing among ourselves the Queen's wartime message to a besieged England: *Keep Calm and Carry On*. That was our lighthearted response to the unprecedented number of fall legislative changes and late-breaking federal requirements that complicated our start of the school year. We had no idea then that the advice to keep calm would take on the far more significant meaning it did last Friday.

Keeping calm and carrying on today is **even more important** in the wake of the Marysville-Pilchuck tragedy.

Each of us cannot help but be rocked to the core by school violence. As caring adults in our students' lives, each of us has a deep and abiding responsibility to remain calm and strong for the students coming back to school this week.

Over this past weekend we continued with athletics and activities so that our students and families would have familiar gathering places and activities that are foundations of normalcy amid the increasingly sad news. Our jobs now include ensuring a continued foundation of normalcy for our students, for our families, and indeed for each other.

Last week I asked you to say "thank you" to school counselors for their extraordinary work in mounting a highly successful *High School & Beyond* series at our high schools. Once again, many among this caring, committed group of colleagues gave their Sunday afternoon and evening to help others express their grief and come together in mutual support at a remembrance vigil held at the Everett High School flag pole. Organized by Everett friends of Marysville families, the vigil was a collective way for our friends and neighbors to be together and to gain strength from each other to continue this so-important work and to recognize the loss a neighboring community feels so acutely today.

As we start this new week, nearly two dozen of our counselors are helping Marysville students and staff work through their grief and the anguish of loss. Other resources will be made available if Marysville leadership calls upon us. In addition, several first responders who answered the call last Friday are helping us learn from the tragedy, and helping us to be better prepared to respond in our own schools.

As we carry on with our school routines and go about the business of teaching and learning, it is only natural that both adults and kids will want to speculate, guess, and discuss opinions about this tragic event. Often this is not helpful, and can lead to highly charged discussions due to the nature of a small community, with all of its complex interconnections. Much discussion occurred through unmediated social media over the weekend, which increases the emotional stakes for our kids. *I ask that you refrain from the desire to engage in these discussions in class.* Gently redirect kids back to

the learning planned for the day. Refer to school counselors those students who need to talk with adults about the tragedy in Marysville. If you need someone to talk to, please take the same advice, and please don't hesitate to use our [Employee Assistance Program](#). School families look to us for strength and stability. I know well, as do you, that while you and I may ache inside, we can prevent this most recent violence from victimizing more than it already has.

Once again, thank you for what you do for our kids, and for the strength and resolve with which you do it day in and day out. Warmest regards.



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