

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
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Subject: Welcome Back!
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Welcome back – to school and to the annual return of our chilly winter cold!

Once again, thank you to staff in our maintenance department who were “on call” over Thanksgiving break and who kept an eye on building systems ... some of our buildings feel the bite of cold weather more than others. Staff turned on some heating systems in some areas to keep buildings warm overnight. HVAC staff were on the computer monitoring systems at the maintenance building before most of us arrived this morning to check that heating and lights were a “go” for today.

Thanks and congratulations also to the amazing Everett High School students whose holiday food drive made headlines in the [Nov. 26 issue](#) of the *Daily Herald* and who “made” the holiday for 200 families. We know from past years that the gathering and giving efforts underway at schools across the district will brighten the lives and fill the cupboards of many other families in our region.

On the topic of “making a difference” for many, we’ll be saying “thank you” on Dec. 9 to a group of former board members whose service to this district spans almost 30 years. Last week I wrote about our current board having been awarded the [2014 Board of the Year](#) honor by their peers at WSSDA. Knowing their work could not have been possible without previous committed board members, we’ve invited to a special celebration next week several recently retired board members who’ve contributed so positively and productively to the board’s solid work over the past several years.

The tribute from current board members to past ones is early in the school board meeting Dec. 9, which begins at 4:30 p.m. in the Community Resource Center board room. I invite you to join us for that “thank you” to a group of people whose quiet, collaborative governance, consistent focus on students, and positive contributions to the steady leadership of the school district helped pave the way for the excellent schools and student-centered programs we have today.

Tomorrow night, Dec. 2, at North Middle School we will hold another school board-hosted gathering. Tomorrow is the *second* of this year’s three [Community Conversations](#) with the board. Starting at 6:30 p.m. in North’s library, the conversation will include state legislators, city and county council members, and several student government leaders. Topics important to students and families – including school construction and K-12 funding – are on the docket for the evening. Our school board and I look forward to those discussions.

How nice it was that the November snow fell on a weekend, and NOT on a school day. That meant no difficult decision about closing or delaying school. I’m hoping for similar “serendipitous” timing through the rest of the season. And, yes ... I’m sure there are some folks who are hoping for different timing. (Just a side note that the new rules passed by the legislature make it less likely I’ll delay school, and more likely I’ll cancel school, so we don’t run into “minimum instructional minutes” penalties.)

Whatever the timing and the times bring us, I am looking forward to the holiday weeks of this month and to visiting with students and staff in schools during the last few days of 2014. And hey, what about those Seahawks?

Warm wishes,

Gary



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