

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
To: [EPS.Maillist](#)
Subject: Happy New Year & Welcome Back!
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Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Dear Colleague:

Welcome back! Happy New Year, and welcome to 2017!

I hope yours was a restful and rejuvenating winter break – whether you stepped away from your important work for a time or whether you continued that work on behalf of our patrons. I took advantage of some down time and also time to “power up” for the joys, achievements, surprises and challenges ahead in 2017.

For our students and schools, 2016 was a very good year. Graduation rates proved to be the highest ever in June 2016. Our students outperformed the state in every single grade and content area on the state assessments that are a part of our accountability responsibilities. Our voters approved a capital bond AND a capital levy in April. Our enrollment projections for last fall were “spot on target.” And we hired 123 new teachers, 17 administrators and nearly 60 classified staff – the best and brightest of a deep applicant pool. Our school board was once again named “Distinguished,” which is the highest honor for school boards in Washington State. Everett Public Schools is known as a great place to work, learn and grow. We turned 125 years old in December and we’re well positioned for a continuously improving additional 125 years.

January, February, and March are intense months for our capital facilities staff and school board.

In these months, we will work with school staff and community to plan the concepts and timing for our next school facilities, those made possible by last spring’s capital bond approval. We’ll be looking at high school options, meaning various ways to provide space, transportation, and scheduling to accommodate a growing number of high school students as well as the state’s 24-credit graduation requirement.

Each February, we receive updated enrollment projections used to plan the following year’s facilities’ needs. You’ll see these when we know the results of our enrollment planning data gathering.

In March, we’ll incorporate January’s work into the enrollment numbers of February, and we’ll dig more deeply into updated site costs and construction plans for projects approved in the bond – and those needed in the future. Working with staff and community, by the end of March, we will have a timeline for voter-approved projects and plans for future projects to propose to voters.

The Washington State Legislature begins again in January; this means our advocacy work with our legislators and budget planning for 2017-18 is also a top priority for this winter and spring. The potential for resolution of the *McCleary* case’s financial challenges that are squarely before the state legislature makes this session particularly important to K-12 education, and very likely a series of regular and special sessions that will last until July.

These are weighty issues for each of us, and I invite you to join and follow the progress through [BoardNotes](#), [NewsLinks](#), [InTouch](#), [Our Schools](#) and these occasional messages from me. And, of course, when you have questions, or suggestions, please share them.

Once again, welcome back and the very happiest New Year to you and yours. And please do take extra measures to stay warm in this cold weather spell we're experiencing. Warm wishes,

Gary



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