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To: [EPS.Maillist](#)
Subject: Welcome Back!
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Good morning, and welcome back! I hope your first three days are turning out as wonderfully as you'd hoped!

Among our goals for this school year's opening was making "Welcome!" a living, breathing experience for every child and adult coming through a school door. Wow! Have you excelled at that goal in these first few days of the year!

From giant bubbles to fist bumps, to high fives and lines of applause and cheers, Everett Public Schools staff opened school doors on Wednesday "show-ready" for Day 1. Adults have been visible everywhere in and around our schools, with radiating smiles and offering "How can I help you today?" assistance to anyone needing it. This is our welcoming culture in action!

These first few days of school I've seen excitement and joy, maybe even some giddiness, everywhere I've visited. At the same time, the extensive preparation and readiness planning is clearly evident, too. As I've visited schools and classrooms during this first week, the "September 2017" calendar is the sole indicator we are only in "week one" of a school year --such has been your extraordinary preparation and planning to open our doors ready to rock and roll from Day 1.

I am so very proud --and grateful-- to see our culture of calm, safety, and quiet assurance threaded throughout the jubilant welcome and fun during these opening days. If you've read our board of director's August 29 [Resolution 1158](#), or you read my message to families this afternoon, I'm confident you'll take pride both in how we live our [core values](#) and in the consistent message that we *"support and care for every student who attends our schools, irrespective of his or her race, color, national origin, creed, religion, sex, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, marital status, age, military status, disability, or immigration status. All of us share the responsibility for proclaiming and maintaining the safety of all who enter our schools to learn."* It may well be that some of us take that for granted. I've come to believe that just like it never hurts to remind our loved ones that we love them, it never hurts to remind our kids and their families that they are safe and welcome in our schools.

You know, I'm reminded during our first few days that the list of what it takes *operationally* to open our schools smoothly is boundless, and the effort necessary to keep our schools *operating* is as well. To succeed operationally AND to make an entire system truly welcoming and safe seems a lot like a miracle. I'm grateful each year for the individuals and teams who make such a feat possible, and I thank you for what you do to start the year off so gracefully and to keep it going smoothly and safely all year. If you get a chance to thank our maintenance, custodial, grounds, tech, food service, or transportation crews who worked long hours to create that sense of sparkling newness, that "spit shine" gleam on our floors, the just-trimmed look around schools, make sure fresh food is on the trays, and to make sure thousands of new computers are user-ready, please give 'em a high five or a "well done."

Thanks for what you do to make the first day --and every day-- the best part each student's day.
Welcome back, and best wishes for another outstanding year in our Everett Public Schools. Warmest regards,

Gary



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