

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
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Good morning! Did you know last night was our middle school art awards ceremony? It was wonderful! During the past few weeks, I've had the most rewarding opportunities to enjoy and to recognize students and teachers for their outstanding art work. It seems like a good idea to share some of that experience with you this morning.

I believe that author Neil Gaiman is credited with saying, *"You can take for granted that people know more or less what a street, a shop, a beach, a sky, an oak tree look like. Tell them what makes this one different."* He's teaching us that through music, visual and performing arts, prose and poetry, we "see" an ordinary street differently, or we cast our eyes or imaginations upon the sky one day and discover it in a different way.

I've been struck by a *Gaimanish* "ah ha moment" this spring during the district's recent art shows, and because of the season's concerts and drama performances, and an on-going public art show in which one of our staff's artistry is featured (more about that staff art later).

My "ah ha moment" includes renewed gratitude for and appreciation of the variety of experiences our students enjoy and the skills they build because the arts are alive and well in our schools. (Check out the picture of our high school [Superintendent's Award](#) winner!) My gratitude extends to community partners who help support arts in our schools. And my appreciation extends back nearly a decade for the community's vision of a district whose strategic plan would emphasize arts in schools. That vision is why the [strategic plan](#) includes these key performance outcomes:

- Our curriculum incorporates arts, language, culture, and history at all levels, and
- At graduation, students have skills and knowledge in world languages, comparative history or culture, global economics, the arts and social justice.

During our [April 10](#) and [May 8](#) board meetings, we highlighted music as a core element of our district's programs. We are growing the number of offerings in our schools, especially through re-establishment of our orchestras at JHS and EHS, and seeing impressive results from numerous music competitions. [Everett Public Schools Foundation](#) grants for field trips to Benaroya Hall help students expand their cultural experiences and "see and feel" music in a venue they might never visit without Foundation funding. Our partnership with the Village Theater and Everett Performing Arts Center allows hundreds of students to experience the joys of community theater. Our new [Music4Life chapter](#) has donated nearly \$50,000 worth of instruments just this year for our schools' students, recently including a spectacular [grand piano](#) for Everett High.

Booster Clubs and school PTA groups donate money and time to support schools' music, song, dance and performances. Each spring, walls and display boards transform the CRC into an art gallery that I believe rivals what one sees in a professional studio. Our students' works and the very special

receptions for the artists elicit praise from all who browse – and justified pride from the families who can't wait to see a piece displayed lovingly for others to view. (Check out the picture of middle school students' fantastically fun sculptures!) [For 20 years](#), our own Everett Public Schools Foundation has made these displays possible. In that time, they have also funded [art scholarships and purchased student art](#) for permanent display on CRC walls.

Educators have long known the arts, sciences, and other academic areas are inextricably linked; we learn best when “all” of our brain fires up to create and analyze. How timely it is to have North Middle School art teacher Cynthia Gaub's work featured in the [Shack Art Center](#) exhibition, [The Intersection of Art + Math](#). As the center describes this display, it “... helps demonstrate how mathematics has influenced art for centuries ... offers a new perspective on how artists utilize math concepts and theories in the creation of their work. Mathematics is a fresh lens to understand art; reckoning with chaos, algorithms, equivalence, topology, geometry and other mathematics tools helps us to see art and the world with more depth...” I visited the display a few days ago, and highly recommend it to you.

For these reasons, I thank all who are preserving and promoting the arts in our schools at the same time we are excelling in other academic arenas. Our world needs both, our students deserve both, and the world will be richer and more beautiful – and yes, “different” – because we have both strong arts and other strong academics offerings in our Everett Public Schools and because we support our students with the opportunity to build 21st century skills essential to their success in college, career, and life. *Thank you for your part in making this a reality.*

Warmest regards on this beautiful, even if a bit cloudy, May morning,

Gary



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