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**Subject:** Happy New Year & Welcome Back!  
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Welcome back on this chilly January morning! While not all of us were here over the holiday break to see it, many of us awoke on Dec. 25 to a beautiful, unbroken blanket of snow frosting deck railings, tree limbs, yards and streets. (I'm a great fan of snow when school is not in session!) It wasn't long before that blank, white slate told the day's stories of snowman construction, snowball flurries, dog walks, under-the-feeder bird seed scavenging, sled rides and spills, and holiday treks' tire tracks among family and friends.

The tracks were laid, and then they were gone. But the memories remain.

So it is with the students and families we serve. If you have doubts or worry your impact is transitory, please read the [Daily Herald's latest "Super Kid"](#) story about Caireanna Mills' triumph over tragedy, or our news release about Harshu Musunuri's [\\$25,000 Siemens Competition award](#) for the quality of her nanoparticle research. These are beautiful stories of two young women's resilience, commitment, and talent, and of how our network of educators and community supported them in their challenges and played critical roles in their successes. You do make a very big difference, and for years to come.

Our school year may have begun back in September 2017, but this new Gregorian year of 2018 gives us another opportunity to affirm our commitments to writing more stories and opening more doors for more students. Oprah Winfrey is quoted as saying, "Cheers to a new year and another chance to get it right." Thanks for all you've done to get things so right for so many – and for your continued commitment to doing so.

I hope your holidays were bright, warm, relaxing, and rejuvenating. Here's to a new year, to new successes, and many more examples of "getting it right" together.

Warm regards,

Gary



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