

Cohn, Gary

From: Cohn, Gary
Sent: Tuesday, January 31, 2017 10:37 AM
To: EPS.MailList
Subject: Our Values, Our Kids, Our Commitments

Dear Colleague:

Over the past several weeks, we've received inquiries and concerns from a number of students, their families, and staff about the impacts of national policy on our schools. These concerns were elevated as a result of last Friday's federal [Executive Order](#) barring individuals in seven predominantly Muslim countries from entering the United States, which has drawn attention nationally and internationally. Understandably, residents in communities our district serves are deeply concerned about the ramifications of this order; emotions are strong and varied, as are opinions about appropriate responses. For many, those emotions give rise to concerns for the safety of students and staff in our schools, as well as their families.

Equity. Passion. Integrity. Respect. Diversity. Collaboration. Learning. These are our district's [core values](#). These seven values, developed through broad community engagement over nearly two years, form the foundation of our work; the "north stars" of our strategic and operational planning, our decisions, our partnerships. They drive our connections with students' families, our legislative advocacy, and are the cornerstone of our professional development investments.

Although our world may be changing, our district core values are rock solid. I firmly believe our commitment to these values, especially our commitment to **Diversity**, is largely the reason we have held strong and continuously improved over time: *"We embrace diversity as an essential asset; we are inclusive and treat our differences as a core strength."* We are joined in this belief by CEOs of some of our state's largest corporations, who have said our diversity is our treasure and our strength.

Our schools are "home away from home" for over 20,000 students whose families speak 90 different languages. We are among the most diverse school districts in the state. No matter the shifting sands of politics around us, we will remain resolute in our commitment to the safety and security of our schools; resolute in our commitment to equity of opportunity for each child in our care; and resolute in our mission *to inspire, educate and prepare each student to achieve to high standards, contribute to our community and thrive in a global society.*

Our success achieving this mission is only possible when we are vigilant in protecting our schools as safe havens for students to learn and grow, and for our staff to do this work. Doing otherwise does not live up to our culture of doing "whatever it takes" to ensure that each student succeeds, and that our schools are free from harassment, intimidation, and bullying. Everyone coming through our schoolhouse doors is entitled to an environment that is welcoming and respectful regardless of religion, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation or identity, country of origin, or immigration status.

The culture of our district, to which we often refer as *The Everett Way*, gives me great confidence that we will stay the course in turbulent or uncertain times, and that we will maintain the culture of calm for which we are so well regarded. Thank you for the work you do each and every day for our students and our community, and for your commitment to live *The Everett Way* each day.

With kindest regards,

Gary



Dr. Gary Cohn

Superintendent

gcohn@everettsd.org

425-385-4009 | 425-385-4012 Fax