

From: [Superintendent](#)
To: [EPS,MailList](#)
Subject: Share your thoughts about the next superintendent
Date: Monday, January 28, 2019 9:09:53 AM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Dear colleagues,

Time and time again during the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend, I thought of you, and all the folks in our district, and the exceptional work that we've done for kids in our community. Normally, I send you a message related to this holiday either on the Friday preceding, or the Tuesday following. I was considering a message of gratitude for many reasons. Ironically, that seed of gratitude sprouted from negative soil – the now famous and still controversial meeting of a young white student in a Make America Great Again hat and a Native American elder drumming a prayer song in our nation's capital.

Whatever our perspectives or opinions of cause or fault for the images of that day in Washington D.C., we can agree they have given us multiple teaching moments and considerable cause to reflect. For me, those reflections included:

- How do we and how should we respond to the shock wave speed and impact of electronic media today?
- How do we form opinions or conclusions about incidents we do not physically attend but which are available in full color and surround sound on screens both tiny and massive?
- What pre-conceived notions and past experiences do we bring into emotionally charged situations, and how do those impact what we think and say and do about those situations?
- When and how do adults interact with and guide students both inside classroom walls and when out in the world as part of school groups?
- How do our schools' cultures inform the actions of our students in our hallways and out in the world – as part of a school group or not?

So, how can one feel "gratitude" in the heat of, and the aftermath of, that incident? Traditional and social media stories are still roiling, and pundits are still holding forth, and often the focus is largely on our country's discord and division.

I've decided I'm grateful because the incident is generating conversations – many of them thoughtful, insightful, and maybe even "game changing." Mostly I'm grateful for YOU and your work to make our schools and our communities safer, more accepting, more inclusive, more collaborative and better than what I heard and read about in the last week. You consistently insulate our students from the turbulence of the world in which we live, so they can concentrate on learning in what we call our "culture of calm."

We each had opportunities to see our equity commitment in action during school Martin Luther King assemblies earlier this month. If you have not already watched it, I encourage you to set aside two and a half minutes to enjoy the video of Everett High School's student-designed, student-led and student enacted [Martin Luther King assembly](#). For me, this video has helped overwrite the troubling images of videos from the "other" Washington. The Everett High video and its ending question and challenge is one example of why I am and we all can be grateful for our work together and the difference we make for students and our communities.

Good people can and do make a difference. Our schools are continually safer and healthier places for students to learn and grow because of your commitment to equity and your belief in the value of each individual.

Thank YOU for being a part of that work. It exemplifies Dr. King's guidance that "Somewhere along the way, we must learn that there is nothing greater than to do something for others."

He also urged us to serve in our community. Today you have an opportunity do just that, and from the comfort of your classroom or office. Please take time today to join the [Thoughtexchange](#) conversation about selecting a new superintendent for this wonderful district. The [timeline and process](#) for the selection process is outlined on the web, and it gets underway in a very important way by gathering your thoughts and the thoughts of the community. *(Some will remember Thoughtexchange online processes of the past. Those involved phases and spanned several weeks. This process is streamlined and is more interactive.)*

This interactive Thoughtexchange process will produce valuable, district-wide perspectives to help the board and the search firm the board will employ to narrow the field of superintendent candidates from which one will be selected to continue supporting your work on behalf of each of our communities' children.

As I've said many times, I believe there is no more professional and dedicated staff than right here in Everett Public Schools. The next superintendent will be, as I have been, blessed to work with you.

Warm regards,

Gary



Gary Cohn

Superintendent

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