

Feb. 15, 2011

Dear colleagues:

CONGRATULATIONS!

This year has started with the same extraordinary level of successes and accomplishments as that which ended 2010. I am pleased to highlight several examples in just these first two months!

- Today, OSPI announced that seven of our schools are recipients of the [2010 Washington Achievement Award!](#) Congratulations to Evergreen and Gateway Middle Schools and Cedar Wood, Garfield, Silver Firs, Silver Lake and Woodside Elementary Schools for the student achievement gains made last year. This news truly is “just off the press.” School teams have been invited to an award ceremony on April 27 in Tacoma to receive awards from state leaders. Please join me in congratulating our colleagues at those schools! They have earned our applause for a job exceptionally well done!
- □ Our YMCA partnership’s [Minority Achievers Program \(MAP\)](#) history and achievements were showcased at the MAP annual banquet on Jan. 21. Our students, MAP coordinators, volunteers, donors and district staff celebrated the program’s connections and learning experiences at the MAP event in the Lynnwood Convention Center. I am terrifically proud of this program, and its communitywide support echoes and reinforces our mission of supporting *each* student’s success.
- □ In late January, Everett High School’s Latin Image Club’s annual [Latino Family Night](#) drew more than 500 people to enjoy dinner and festivities and messages from Mexican Consulate Alejandro Garcia Moreno, Everett Mayor Ray Stephanson and School Board President Ed Petersen. These dignitaries emphasized the importance of working hard, staying in school, continuing education after high school, and family involvement. The student presentations were just as impressive and impactful – demonstrating for all that student leaders of today are fully capable of being the world’s articulate and values-centered leaders of tomorrow. Congratulations to these students and their advisors, administrators, parents and volunteers for a spectacularly successful event!
- □ Over 490 more students are playing soccer in our school programs thanks to community partners like the Boys and Girls Club and the leadership efforts of Athletic Director Robert Polk. Last year 102 elementary students were involved in soccer; this year we have 460. Middle school soccer has grown from 90 students last year to 225 this year.

Why have we emphasized soccer programs? Because some students come to us with a definition of and experience with “football” that is different than that

associated with Super Bowl spirit. As a result, students familiar with and extraordinarily skilled at “soccer” were not necessarily signing up for our organized sports programs. They were playing soccer in parks and on neighborhood streets but not as part of their school experiences. Now they are on school teams, and more families are connected to our schools in a new and exciting way.

- January's *Celebration of Innovation* took the great ideas of more than 20 years of *Technology Fairs* to a new level – with hands on demonstrations and interactive displays for students and adults who came in droves to see the latest and best examples of technology-infused education. Congratulations to the Instructional Technology staff for months of planning and to all of the school staff who made this, once again, a shining example of how, why and what our students are learning. Thank you to the countless individuals and teams who helped this event go seamlessly and joyfully for all.
- Also in January, we recognized the 2010 class of National Board Certified Teachers – an annual tradition that honors the work and professionalism of those who have proven their excellence as master educators. We now have 118 such certificated staff in our schools. Some of them spoke to the school board on Jan. 11 and were congratulated personally by board members for their achievements. Congratulations to these exemplary professionals on their recognition!
- January was *National School Board Appreciation* month – a time when we stop to say “thank you” to these elected officials who advocate for you and for your students. During the board Jan. 24 meeting, Cascade Principal Cathy Woods and Madison Principal Mark Toland presented each board member with a certificate of thanks.
In honor of the National School Board Recognition Month, the Everett Association of School Administrators would like to show our appreciation for your dedication to our children and public education at Everett Public Schools. We applaud our school board members for their vision and voice to help shape a better tomorrow. We recognize the commitment and sacrifices you make as citizens with extraordinary dedication to our school district.

While January is the “official” month for such appreciation of board members, our board members deserve your thanks 12 months of the year for the countless hours they devote to guiding the district and making decisions that support our work and our students’ successes.

To get an idea of their scope of work and the depth of information and knowledge board members must have, I invite you to view the new BoardDocs eGovernance area of our website. This growing repository of board meeting agendas, background materials, minutes and related documents provides you

and members of the public access to information and documents that our board uses to make its decisions and set direction for our work. This is one more example of our board's dedication to transparency in its work.

- During their meeting last Tuesday, our school board authorized approval of a contract for a new Student Information System (SIS) and Learning Management System (LMS). This is a major component of the funding authorized in 2010 when the community approved our request for technology funds. It is the culmination of three years of dedicated work by staff to research the very best software companies with the capability and dedication to gather, collate, manage and display data that will even more precisely help us tailor instruction and assessment to meet the needs of each student. Watch for more details about LMS and how it will transform the way we all do business and interact with parents and the community. Congratulations and thank you to the scores of colleagues who have been working on this system for several years.

The weeks ahead hold even more opportunities for you to shine:

- ☐ This is the season of the *State of the School Reviews* (SOSRs). Board members, administrators and I always look forward to this season and opportunities to meet staff and students and to see and learn firsthand how the district mission is thriving in schools.
- ☐ More than 600 of you have signed up for the [Wellness Challenge](#). The emphasis on good health and healthy choices is mirrored for our families and students in a recent and an upcoming school event:
 - H.M. Jackson High teamed with the [Nick of Time Foundation](#) to provide [heart screenings for teens](#) on Feb. 2 – an early detection process that could save lives and that did, indeed, alert some families to undetected health issues they are now able to proactively manage.
 - Evergreen Middle School is hosting a [Teen, Tweens and Parents](#) health fair on Feb. 19 that not only will help families learn healthy ways to eat and exercise, but is an opportunity for students to receive low-cost vaccinations.

The weeks ahead will also be full of continually changing “news” about the financial impacts of state legislative discussions now underway.

As I explained in my last message, we are fortunate (because of our local voters' support) not to be making midyear staffing cuts as are other districts around us. We are able to maintain for the rest of this school year the incredible momentum for our students. The district's [Fiscal Advisory Council](#) is deep in its work to guide recommendations for what are very likely to be painful budget cuts for next fall and beyond. As the FAC work continues and as legislative decisions begin to solidify, I will

be sharing more information with you. You are also invited to take part in the public meetings on [March 7, 9 and 29](#).

Thank you for your stellar and steadfast work for students and especially for doing that most important work amidst the ambiguity of these financially challenging times and the uncertainties they present for each of us.

Gary