

**From:** Superintendent  
**Sent:** Tuesday, November 06, 2012 1:53 PM  
**To:** EPS.MailList  
**Subject:** The power of pumpkins, passion for our work and partnerships!  
**Importance:** High

Dear colleague,

Over the weekend, my wife Sue and I puzzled at how quickly this fall has passed – “HOW can it already be time to compost the pumpkins?”

Indeed, these first two months of the school year have really zipped by – even amidst the gangbuster activity that is happening everywhere in the school district. From the first day to this election day, our passion for supporting this community’s children is evident in every office, classroom, hallway and playfield.

Once again, your carefully-planned and well-orchestrated work opened the doors of 26 schools to more than 18,000 students on Sept. 5. For those who reflect upon the effort it takes to coordinate each year’s first day of school, this achievement is awe-inspiring. I know it happens each fall, around the country, almost as an unheralded and expected rite of the season. I know, and our school board knows, it is a traditional feat. But it happens exceptionally well here because every member of our team does exceptional work. For making it happen, on behalf of the families and students of the district, “thank you!”

One month after school opened, on the October enrollment count day, approximately 18,600 students were in our schools. Elementary enrollment was about 8,800; middle school, 4,300, and students in grades 9-12 added up to just almost 5,500. We projected that our enrollment in the all-important October count would be about 18,500, so we have about 100 more students than projected.

Three other numbers sum up our collective goals for these students:

- **100%** graduate
- The next **20%** to reach learning standards
- **Zero** achievement gaps among federal subgroups

These three numbers represent the district’s achievement goals for each student – and they are the three numbers for which our community and our families will hold us accountable.

Not only is the community expecting great things from us – they are actively partnering with us to make great things a reality. Here are some recent examples – and reasons for us to enter this traditional season of gratitude with much for which to be thankful.

**1. Rotary *Next Generation* Project of \$200,000 has another \$50,000 PLUS \$10,000**

Last summer, during the last few weeks of the school year, Everett Rotary announced their \$200,000 multi-year commitment to the [Next Generation Project](#). This announcement was the result of more than a year’s research,

planning and collaboration, including [my letter of support](#) that helps clarify the nature of our partnership and the power that comes from many good people uniting behind a proven program.

Adding to the strength of the *Next Generation Project* is another \$10,000 commitment from the Everett Public Schools Foundation – a historical partner in this world’s most important work.

On Friday, the [Daily Herald](#) also commemorated the Gates donation in an article that emphasized the multiple benefits of the district having so many strategic partners.

## **2. Boeing awards Foundation [\\$26,000 for district STEM programs](#)**

Our Everett Public Schools Foundation not only “grants” funds to teachers for classroom projects, it helps pay tuition for full day kindergarten children, and it makes summer school possible for students unable to pay that tuition.

On Friday, we announced that Boeing responded to a Foundation grant proposal to support the district’s Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) initiative. As the manager of this grant, the Foundation continues its commitment to student success and further strengthens our strategic relationships with community organizations and businesses.

(You can see the entire [STEM presentation](#) shared with the school board at their meeting on Oct. 23 archived on BoardDocs. The presentation gives you a picture of STEM history and impressive future in the district.)

- 3.** Similarly, we learned last week that the [food bank project](#) inspired by Jackson High School students has won a partnership award that will be commemorated later this month. Because a few students became concerned about peers who did not have enough food, the district, Jackson High School, the city of Mill Creek, Mill Creek Rotary, Mill Creek businesses, volunteers and the Volunteers of America are coordinating a weekly food bank. Originally distributed from Jackson High School, the food bank distribution is now on the Heatherwood Middle School campus and open every Thursday night from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m..

Jackson High activities coordinator Judi Montgomery summed up the spirit of this project by saying, “This is wonderful recognition for a true collaborative effort. I hope that it is only the beginning of projects that involve multiple agencies. Everett School District should be pleased that they are leading the way in this effort of business, city government, and education working hand in hand for the benefit of our community. In my opinion it is the way it should be.”

I agree completely!

Two years ago, when our school board approved our new [strategic plan](#), “strategic relationships” appeared as one of the five priorities for that plan. These latest grants and awards are recent examples of that strategic plan alive, well and growing.

You will see that “strategic relationship” priority also alive and well in the new Community Resource Center (CRC) when it opens on Broadway a year from now. The CRC will consolidate the majority of district support services into one, easily accessible location. Dedicated space within the CRC is earmarked for strategic partners such as the Foundation and the PTSA Council. These organizations share our mission and core values. Together we can do so much more than we can separately, and in times of dwindling resources, it is smart, proactive and more productive to combine efforts and target resources and human energy. We are indeed fortunate to live in a community that supports its schools, its children and the work and systems necessary to ensure that students learn today so they can lead tomorrow.

And back to the topic of composting pumpkins – Does your site have a *Green Team*? Our maintenance and custodial staff have been partnering with food and nutrition staff, teachers, students and volunteers in *Green Teams* across the district. The teams are setting up recycling and compost systems to not only safeguard the environment, but potentially save thousands of dollars in garbage hauling costs. Pumpkins are heavy; if we put them in compost containers, those pounds do not “weigh in” and thus “cost” to be dumped at the landfill. Once again, this is a partnership effort – with the city of Everett, Rubatino, Waste Management, Cedar Grove Composting, and Fibres International. Early this year, when we launched research into the concept of *Green Teams*, we estimated that diverting 16 tons of waste each month within the district could save \$8,000 a year.

Not only is the *Green Team* work helping control trash and costs, but *Green Team* science curriculum and learning opportunities are being coordinated with our Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) team. We are also sharing our progress and learning from Arlington School District which also has district *Green Teams*.

The friendly folks at the maintenance and custodial department can help you get your *Green Team* going. You can also visit [www.wagreenschools.org](http://www.wagreenschools.org) for a wealth of information about sustainability, green teams, recycling and more.

No wonder the first months of the school year have gone by so quickly – time DOES fly when you are having fun, and when you are doing the world’s most important work!

Thank you for all you do – including composting!

Warm regards,

Gary