



August 2011

Dear Staff,

It is an early morning day in Eastern Washington and I am sitting on the deck of our condo waiting for the sun to peek over the beautiful cliffs. For almost 30 years of summer vacations, I have sat in the same chair enjoying my morning coffee while looking at the cliffs that were carved by a river many, many years ago. At this moment, they are a beautiful dark brown. Throughout the day, the colors on the cliffs change from dark brown to tan and then at the end of the day, they turn a spectacular orange. I always send a photo to my mother-in-law if she is not with us as "orange" is her favorite moment, too. As the sun sets, the cliffs turn a bit of green before returning to the deep brown of the morning before sunrise. Ahhhh....the rest, rejuvenation and tradition of summer! I hope this note finds you having a restful and happy summer. I am excited to tell you a bit about our opening!

Six years ago, our daughter Anna did her History Day project at Thunder Mountain Middle School on the tragedy that occurred at Columbine High School in 1999. Anna is a go-getter when it comes to doing research. She interviewed many individuals who were directly connected to the tragedy and was even taken on a tour of Columbine High School by the principal. It was a great learning experience for her and our entire family. As superintendent, I have continued to read and learn from this tragedy. Last February, I had the chance to hear Darrell Scott address a group of superintendents on a program entitled "Rachel's Challenge." It's a program that does not want to be known as having an anti-bullying agenda. This program addresses how we might positively and proactively model and work with our students around the concepts of kindness and compassion.

Since February, we have explored the possibilities of bringing "Rachel's Challenge" to our school district. I have had the opportunity to share "Rachel's Challenge" with many community groups. So far, the Enumclaw Regional Healthcare Foundation, Franciscan Foundation and the Enumclaw Schools Foundation have given grants to support the cost. Bringing "Rachel's Challenge" has grown from a school district project to a community-wide endeavor. A group of EHS students, school district staff members and business leaders have been meeting throughout the summer to plan this launch.

In concept, "Rachel's Challenge" will be launched with the entire staff and community on September 1. It will then filter out to each of our schools during the month of September. This planning group has organized a community-wide project that will begin in September and culminate with a "Rachel's Rally" on March 6th.

I read a book recently that put some language around seeing and listening. The author said we all can see or hear something happen ... seeing an elderly person who needs help opening a door or listening to a friend or family member's story, but he linked the words seeing and hearing to *recognizing and responding*. Do we *recognize* when a person needs help with a door and do we *respond*? Long ago when I was a teacher, I heard the sentence, "I know you listened, but did you truly hear?" I never have forgotten this sentence and it comes to the forefront of my mind when I am having conversations with students, staff and parents/community. I now believe the words *recognize* and *respond* have taken this sentence to a new level of understanding for me.

I am really excited about the impact that "Rachel's Challenge" can have on our school system and community. I don't believe we can truly understand all the avenues it may support. I am so anxious for you to hear the presentation at our all-staff gathering on September 1. I do hope that you will not only listen and hear, but I hope

it will create a bit of recognizing and responding. I would be honored if you will join me in leading the principles of “Rachel’s Challenge” in our school system and throughout our community.

Last spring, during the ASB elections, I learned something from Cole Snider our 2011-2012 EHS ASB President. He was able to use the word love in an appropriate manner with the entire student body. As I enter my fifth full year as superintendent, I am honored and grateful to serve each of you. In the community, I am often asked about my position and the question is usually framed in a way that a negative response would most likely be an answer. “How do you like being superintendent with the budget reductions?” or “I’m sure you do not like being superintendent with all of the testing requirements...” I respond the same each time, “I love my job!” I believe the #1 reason for answering these inquiries in this manner is each of you. Your commitment to do all you can for our students is making a positive difference in their lives. I am thankful to reflect and learn from Cole. Our students have so much to offer! Welcome back to the 2011 – 2012 school year!

With love and respect for the work you do with our students,

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday
August 29 New Teacher Breakfast at VFW Hall	August 30 Building inservice day (for all but EMS, Sunrise is a partial day)	August 31 Building inservice day	September 1 *District Day: 7:30 Breakfast & Benefits Fair in EHS Commons 9:00 Rachel’s Challenge	September 2 7:00 PM First football game on new turf!
September 5 Labor Day	September 6 First Day of School!			

*For some of you, September 1st is not a required work day. I do want you to feel welcome to join us for our district-wide breakfast and speaker if you are able.