



New school year, new challenges, new successes

Dear Families,

Teachers and staff here are enthusiastic and prepared to begin a new school year and welcome the district's 13,000 students, parents and the community to a productive school year.

The new academic year brings many challenges as well as many rewards.

Throughout the summer, and during the school year, teachers hone their skills to provide appropriately challenging course material to draw on students' interests, culture and experiences. Our teachers—62 percent of whom have advanced degrees—have developed a deep understanding of their subject matter and undergone rigorous and specific training to adapt instructional methods to individual needs.

Additionally, Washington state is a national leader in education reform. Our standards are higher than ever before and more is expected of our students. Some of the new challenges facing us in the

coming year include readying students for the new graduation requirements beginning with the class of 2008. Although these changes affect this year's 10th-graders, they impact all students, our curriculum and how we teach.

The new rigorous graduation requirements to earn a high school diploma include earning a minimum of 22 credits and:

- Earning a Certificate of Academic Achievement by passing the 10th-grade Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, writing and math by the end of high school. Some students may earn a Certificate of Individual Achievement by passing an alternative test.

- Completing a culminating project that integrates experiences and knowledge.

- Crafting an education plan for high school and beyond.

- Completing senior academic core classes.

To help high school students with these more demanding requirements,

teachers and staff in the district's three comprehensive high schools will collaborate in a series of Wednesday morning training sessions. They will design models to help reduce the achievement gap and increase the number of students who feel connected to school and are motivated to learn. That means a 9:30 a.m. start on 18 Wednesdays throughout the school year for students attending Hazen, Lindbergh and Renton high schools. (See box with "school start/end times.")

At elementary and middle schools, and elsewhere throughout the district, we continue to implement research-based, best-practice teaching, infused with technology, to personalize and enhance classrooms. That combined with a philosophy and understanding of who our students are, what their cultural needs are and how their home life and communities shape their individual needs, allows our district to grow and succeed.

These years of learning, growth and exploration for

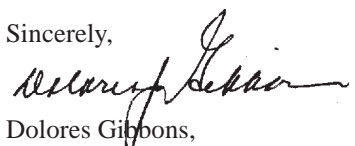


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your child are important. Please take time to become familiar with your children's school, as well as provide a homework-friendly environment that will allow your children to excel.

As an integral part of your child's education, you and our teachers work best as a team. Your enthusiasm inspires your children to do their best. Your involvement, nurturing and guidance make a difference in your child's achievement.

Sincerely,



Dolores Gibbons,
Superintendent

Start/dismissal times

High Schools 7:20 a.m.–2:00 p.m.
Black River H.S. 7:30 a.m.–1:40 p.m.

Hazen, Lindbergh and Renton high schools will start at 9:30 a.m. on the following Wednesday's:
Sept. 28; Oct. 5, 12, 19, 26; Dec. 7, 14;
Jan. 11, 18; Feb. 8, 15; March 1, 8, 15,
29; May 17.

Middle Schools 8:00 a.m.–2:30 p.m.

Elementary Schools:
Benson Hill 8:40 a.m.–3:05 p.m.
Bryn Mawr 8:50 a.m.–3:05 p.m.
Campbell Hill, Cascade, Hazelwood &
Highlands 8:40 a.m.–3:05 p.m.
Hillcrest 9:15 a.m.–3:15 p.m.
Kennydale 9:05 a.m.–3:30 p.m.

Lakeridge, & Maplewood
8:40 a.m.–3:05 p.m.
Renton Park 9:15 a.m.–3:40 p.m.
Sierra Heights 9:05 a.m.–3:30 p.m.
Talbot Hill 9:05 a.m.–3:35 p.m.
Thomson 8:40 a.m.–3:05 p.m.
Tiffany Park 8:40 a.m.–3:05 p.m.