

August 6, 2009

My work phone number is 924-1830. My home number is 928-0519. My e-mail address is glenewinkelj@evsd.org. If you have a question about our operations I hope you will contact me.

As we make preparations for the coming school year, I realized that it is a year full of promise. I believe the EastValley School District is an organization on the verge of greatness. It is a caring organization with competent, dedicated teachers, families who are committed to supporting their children and students who can compete with any students, anywhere.

We have managed some impressive things for the coming year. While districts across the state cut teaching jobs, through lay-offs and attrition, we avoided a reduction in force and were actually able to maintain our level of staffing. While districts across the state have cut programs and have decided to charge for basic services, like athletics and transportation, we have been able to add programming and increase our academic offerings.

At this point in my message, tradition would dictate that I continue this welcome with platitudes and effusive statements designed to engender your confidence and gloss over our relative shortcomings. I cannot, in good faith, pursue that course.

We are a good organization, but we need to get better. If you compare the performance of our students to our neighboring districts you will find that, in general, we lag behind our neighbors in academic performance. If you would like to make these comparisons yourself I encourage you to visit: <http://reportcard.ospi.k12.wa.us/summary.aspx?year=2007-08>.

We have a great deal of work to do to make it to the next level. I have, with the support of the Board of Directors, our outstanding teaching staff and our committed administrative and support staff undertaken a variety of actions to restructure our organization. These actions change the way we do business on many levels and will make some people uncomfortable. On the surface these actions might seem irresponsible or even reckless: How can we add programs, increase administrative support, add options for students and thrive in these fiscal times?

Without going into detail let me state that we are able to take these actions because we spent last year building the capacity of the district to weather the current financial storm. We will spend the coming year continuing to increase capacity. Increased capacity allows our primary focus to be on improved student achievement; at all levels. To build this capacity we will take some risk.

I am not absolutely certain that the changes I have implemented or the risks I have assumed will work. I do believe they are the best for students and will improve student outcomes by giving our staff the tools to better serve student needs. I do believe the changes I have set forth are essential if we are to move to the next level of performance as an organization.

As we make these changes and begin to do business differently, the critics are likely to be vocal and persistent. I will take any criticism and I will accept full responsibility for any failures that occur due to these changes. However, I ask that if you are going to attack that you become informed. Rumors, gossip and uninformed speculation will not serve any productive purpose. My work phone number is 924-1830. My home phone is 928-0519. My e-mail address is glenewinkelj@EVSD.org.

John