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Windham Public Schools – Back-to-School Letter 2026 - 2027 School Year

Office of the Superintendent

August 11, 2026

Dear Windham Families,

It is with great excitement that I welcome you to the 2026 - 2027 school year! I hope you have had a fantastic summer. Our first day of school is **August 27**, and we are excited to welcome back our amazing students!

Last year, we made great progress across the district. This year, we will build on that progress under the theme:

Strong Foundation. *Accelerating Impact.*

Our mission continues to guide us: ensuring that every student has equitable access to a high-quality education and is prepared to succeed in college, career, and life. This year, we will continue looking closely at what is working, where we need to improve, and how our work is making a difference for every student.

This Year's Focus:

Our work will continue to center on three district priorities that are essential to student success:

- **Attendance & Engagement: School is Better With You!** Every day matters for learning. The first 60 days help set the tone for the entire year, which is why we will launch a districtwide **60-Day Attendance Challenge for students and staff**. Together, we will focus on being present, establishing positive habits, building meaningful relationships, and strengthening our school community. **Let's make the first 60 days count!**
- **High-Quality Instruction:** All students will engage in rigorous, standards-driven, grade-level learning and meaningful student discourse, with the supports they need to succeed. This year, we will deepen our focus on cognitive rigor and opportunities for students to think critically, problem-solve, and share their thinking.

- **Safe & Productive Learning Environments:** Every student will learn in an environment where they feel safe, engaged, included, valued, challenged, and supported. We will continue strengthening student voice, restorative practices, behavior supports, and clear expectations for students.

Celebrations:

We have much to celebrate as we begin the year!

- **More students were in school and ready to learn.** Chronic absenteeism decreased by nearly 8 percentage points, meaning more than 200 additional students attended school more consistently than in the previous year. Our district's chronic absenteeism rate is now at its lowest level since 2020!
- **We made progress toward safer, more productive learning environments,** with exclusionary discipline decreasing by 37.8%.
- **Preliminary state assessment data shows promising academic growth.** We are seeing gains in literacy and mathematics, with bright spots across schools, grade levels, classrooms, and student groups. More than one in four students achieved maximum growth in mathematics, with particularly encouraging growth among students in our Dual Language programs and students receiving special education services. We are also seeing strong examples of growth in literacy, including classrooms where over 40% of students achieved maximum growth.
- **Our students reached important milestones.** 50 students earned the Seal of Biliteracy, and 77 students exited English Learner status, our highest number on record for both measures. Our four-year graduation rate reached 86%, the highest in district history, and students had access to more than 400 seats in college-credit courses.

These accomplishments reflect the hard work of our students, the commitment of our staff, and the support of our families and community partners. **You are part of this progress. Thank you!**

Summer Happenings:

- **Our schools are ready!** Our custodial, facilities, IT, and operations teams have been hard at work preparing our buildings for students and staff. We are grateful for their hard work and dedication.
- **Summer learning continued across the district.** Our summer programs provided students with opportunities to continue learning, receive additional support, and stay connected to school.

- **Our leaders continued learning and planning.** Our leaders have been reviewing last year's progress, examining student data, identifying bright spots and areas for improvement, and examining the practices, systems, and leadership actions that will have the greatest impact on student outcomes.

We want to thank our families and community partners for your continued support and collaboration as we begin the new school year. I am excited to welcome our students back and look forward to a wonderful year of learning, growth, and impact!

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Dr. Iris Gomero
Superintendent of Schools