



3900 Broadway, Everett, WA 98201
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August 20, 2014

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Dear Families:

More than 10 years ago, in 2001, the federal government passed the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) law. Two years ago, some parts of the law were “waived” for Washington State. In June, the federal government rescinded that waiver, and NCLB penalties have been reapplied to our schools. Educators and many lawmakers feel strongly that NCLB is an antiquated law that must be updated. We wholeheartedly agree with that opinion.

NCLB requires that school districts in 2014 must have **100 percent** of students “at standard” in math and reading at each grade tested last spring. NCLB says each student, whether that student speaks very limited English or qualifies for special education services, at every school in Everett Public Schools (and every other district in the state) must pass last spring’s state tests. Only those districts in which **100 percent** of students are at standard are considered by NCLB to have met Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP).

Although Everett Public Schools has experienced remarkable growth in students’ performance on these tests, the district has not yet reached 100 percent of students at standard. **Some** students from some low income families did not meet standard. **Some** students who qualify for special education services did not meet standard. **Some** students with limited English language skills did not meet standard.

Because of that “failure” to reach 100 percent for each subject at each grade at each school, the district must now “set aside” \$2 out of every \$10 that comes from federal Title I funds. We must take that money from classrooms and use it for two things – transportation for students in Title I-funded schools that are in a Step of Improvement who choose to attend schools that are not, and to provide Supplemental Educational Services such as after school tutoring for qualifying students. For Everett Public Schools, that “set aside” taken from classrooms totals almost \$600,000.

When you visit schools this year, you will continue to see dedicated students, parents, teachers, and staff working together to help each student learn each day. High school graduates are prepared for college and careers in ever increasing numbers. Everett Public Schools is recognized regionally and nationally for student success in robotics, STEM, music, athletics, and other student and staff achievements.

We are fully committed to each student reaching his or her potential, and we are proud of the strong academic progress our students are making. While not 100 percent of our students have reached standard, we are targeting resources to help struggling students and schools. This is making a difference; test scores are trending higher as are our graduation rates. You too can “catch the spirit” of our communities’ educational commitment and continuous improvement process:

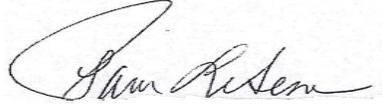
1. We invite you to [volunteer in a school](#) or sign up for the district *InTouch* e-newsletter (the link for *InTouch* is at the bottom of the [district homepage](#)).
2. Our district career and technical advisory committees are looking for business industry expert members – especially in science, technology, engineering, and math fields. To express your interest in being an industry advisory committee member or a student mentor, email [Diane Storm](#) or call 425-385-4073. Diane can also help connect you to school robotics clubs seeking enthusiastic adult role models and advisors with an interest in computers and “imagineering.”
3. The district [PTSA Council](#) and individual school PTSA groups help support school programs and student learning experiences. Joining a PTSA or school booster group is as easy as calling your school office to make a connection.
4. [Everett Public Schools Foundation](#) has 30 years of history supporting teachers, students and parents. In October, the Foundation will help sponsor the district-wide *High School and Beyond* events at Cascade, Everett, and Jackson high schools. If you would like to help students from kindergarten through high school learn about work, education, and careers after high school, contact the Foundation for ways to join its October effort and year round work to support each student’s learning.
5. This year and next, the [Capital Facilities Advisory Council](#) will reevaluate district facilities and needs to provide the superintendent advice about future construction, maintenance and facilities projects. If you have an interest in long-term planning, check out that council’s role and responsibilities and email [Susie Halsey](#) or call 425-385-4190 to express your interest.
6. Did you know the science resource center assembles and distributes more than 1,600 science kits each year? Students use them to discover the magic of science in elementary, middle, and high schools. The retired Boeing [Bluebills](#) are stalwart volunteers at the science resource center, and they welcome others who enjoy working with their hands to assemble the science kits. Contact [Shirley Maynard](#) by email or call 425-385-4676 to help. Science kit subjects span weather, robotics, engineering, physics, botany, biology, and more. The kits are much-anticipated packages of learning excitement for students and valuable resources for teachers.

Those are some of the ways to be involved in the district's continuous improvement and its work to inspire, educate, and prepare each student to achieve to high standards, contribute to our community, and thrive in a global society.

Sincerely,



Dr. Gary Cohn
Superintendent



Pam LeSesne
President, Board of Directors

P.S. On Sunday, Aug. 17, the *Seattle Times* printed columnist Danny Westneat's thoughts about these federal requirements. Referring to the 100 percent mandate as "... the lowest point yet in the drive to reform public education," he added, "That level of perfection is rare with kids as with adults, so it effectively means all our schools are failing." His full opinion is [online](#).