



Date: August 27, 2020

To: Our Valued Classified Employees

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Regarding: Employment Status

We hope you and your families are all doing well during this very unusual time. We understand that many of you are anxious to know more about how starting the school year with a remote learning model may affect you and your employment. Recently, your leadership team met with district representatives to discuss the impacts of the remote learning model as it relates to classified positions, and have been analyzing the situation focusing on two primary factors:

1. **Budget:** The full extent of the financial impact of the COVID-19 pandemic is unknown. As you know, school districts are funded primarily by student enrollment and therefore we will not know if we will be facing a funding reduction until we have confirmation of our enrollment after the school year has started. In the meantime, we are operating conservatively with regard to current vacancies; evaluating each position on a case-by-case basis to determine if it must be filled at this time, or if it can wait until we have a firmer understanding of our budget situation. If we have a significant reduction in enrollment in September or October, we will re-evaluate our staffing needs at that time.
2. **Availability of Work:** When students are not physically in schools, the need for some positions are reduced, or in some cases may not be needed at all. Last spring, we were able to continue paying staff while working remotely by engaging them in online professional development, performing their regular duties when feasible, and being available during their workday for telephone calls and email. However, that is not a sustainable model. We care about all of our staff, so we are carefully evaluating all positions to determine which may be impacted by our fully remote learning model.

This is challenging news, so we want to ensure our communications are thorough and clear. This process will continue for a while as we need to gain a better understanding of how the

work will look under the current learning model and the hybrid learning model. However, we do have some changes today. There are certain groups of classified employees who will be impacted by furloughs due to either a lack of work or a significant reduction in available work (more information about what a furlough means is provided below).

Drivers: Effective 9/8/20, a significant number of Everett Public Schools drivers will be placed on a full-time furlough and some will have their hours reduced. The exact number of impacted staff is still being determined as we continue to evaluate staffing levels.

Food & Nutrition Services: Effective 9/8/20, a significant number of Nutrition Services staff will be placed on a full-time furlough and some will have their hours reduced. The exact number of affected staff is still being determined as we continue to evaluate staffing levels.

Paraeducators: Effective 9/8/20 health room assistants and crossing guards will be placed on a full-time furlough. Some supervisory paraeducators will be partially furloughed and some paraeducators holding only non-instructional positions may be placed on a full-time furlough.

Custodians: Effective 9/8/20 a number of swing custodians will be placed on full-time furlough.

Courier/Warehouse (head utility, courier/warehouse, floater): Effective 9/8/20, some employees in the courier/warehouse group will be placed on part-time or full-time furlough.

Non-Represented: Effective 9/8/20, some employees under the technical and miscellaneous non-represented classification will be placed on full-time furloughs.

How will the furloughed staff be chosen?

A furlough is different than a layoff and the identification of the staff impacted may differ from the layoff process. The district and associations will be working together to discuss the implementation of the furloughs.

The decision to place staff on furlough rather than implementing layoffs is due to our very clear intent to bring staff back when, not if, the work becomes available again. At some point this pandemic will end and we fully intend to return furloughed staff to their original positions, as much as we possibly can.

We value you and the work you perform, and we do not want to sever our employment relationship during this difficult time. By placing staff on furlough, we can hopefully ease the burden of not receiving a paycheck by continuing to provide health benefits for staff as we weather this storm.

What is a furlough?

A furlough is an alternative to a layoff, which allows effected staff to remain employed. It is essentially a mandatory unpaid leave of absence. While there is no work to perform and therefore no wages are provided during the furlough period, **the district will continue to pay the employer-paid portion of health benefits for furloughed staff who were eligible for benefits as of 2/29/2020 as long as they remain furloughed.**

Furloughed staff will still be required to pay for the employee-paid responsibility of their

benefits. Staff who are furloughed may be eligible for both state and available federal unemployment benefits. More information about unemployment options can be found at <https://esd.wa.gov/>.

How long will the furlough last?

We don't know how long our distance learning model will be in place, so we can't say how long the furlough will last. However, we are committed to maintaining staff in furlough status through at least December 31, 2020, if we have not returned them to work by then. Please note that this commitment could change if the district is faced with a significant reduction in enrollment that impacts its ability to continue the arrangement.

Also, it is likely that some work will become available prior to the return to full face-to-face instruction, and staff will be recalled to work based on the furlough procedures that are developed.

Will any other employees be furloughed or face a reduction in hours?

It is possible. We are continuing to evaluate our operations and additional staff could be impacted at a later date. Also, if the district faces a reduction in enrollment or otherwise experiences a cut in funding, we will have to reassess our staffing needs.

What are the next steps if I am in one of the groups being furloughed?

If you are going to be furloughed, you will receive a letter from the district soon. Once we know which staff will be affected, those individuals will be contacted personally prior to receiving a letter. We anticipate being able to identify impacted staff by the end of next week.

District and association leadership both regret the need to proceed with these furloughs, but we also understand the realities that this continued COVID-19 pandemic presents to us. We greatly appreciate the work that all of you perform and we will continue to work together to minimize the impacts of the ongoing pandemic on classified employees. Stay safe and take care of yourselves.