

News Release
Everett Public Schools



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Community engagement – *WHAT are people saying about the events?*

“Thank you for this wonderful opportunity! We feel so welcome and supported, and would like to help you reach your goals. ...”

“Thank you for the courage and commitment to listen to the parents, students, and community.”

“I like being involved with gatherings such as this where I feel the people around me actually listen and take my ideas/thoughts into consideration when trying to come up with a plan to make important decisions.” (a student)

More than 50 parents, students, and community members, representing a host of businesses, community service agencies, and community support systems, spent three-and-a-half hours last month discussing the impact of Equity and Access issues in Everett Public Schools. The June event was the third in a series of four group discussions on specific topics hosted by the board of directors of Everett Public Schools. The information gathered at each session will be used in developing the district's next Strategic Plan. The new plan is slated to begin by fall 2011.

Participants were asked to respond to two important questions: 1. *If there were Equity and Access for every student in Everett Public Schools, how would we know? What would that look like?* and 2. *What is it going to take to ensure Equity and Access for every student in our district?*

Many participants described the need to call out and act on the belief that each student can achieve. Many stated that cultural competency training for all (staff, students, volunteers, families, and others) can help affirm and widen belief in each student's abilities. Most emphasized a need for more financial support for their recommendations, while also acknowledging the challenge of funding such initiatives in today's economy. They suggested strengthening school-community-family partnerships already in place, and initiating such connections through early intervention at the preschool level as well as at early stages in the education process. Many noted a need for more and better structured preschool and after-school activities to support students, and students' families. Overall, the themes of training, commitment, and the need for funding echoed throughout the evening.

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How YOU can join the conversations and get more information

Those wanting to join the sessions or learn more about the process can do so by:

- Calling 425-385-4048. (This is a message line; please leave your contact information so event organizers can get back to you quickly.)
- Emailing reese@everettsd.org. Bob Reese will contact you to discuss which session or sessions will fit into your schedule.
- Writing to Community Engagement Process, Everett Public Schools, 4730 Colby Ave., Everett, WA 98203. Be sure to include your contact information, and indicate which session or sessions will fit into your schedule.

Two important community engagement sessions in the next 90 days

Wednesday, Aug. 25, 5:30-8:30 p.m., a discussion of *Work, Career and College Ready* at [H.M. Jackson High School at 1508 136th St. SE, Mill Creek](#). (*Note: this is a change from the originally announced location.*) This session will help define what work, career and college ready means and what support structures must be in place for students to become flexible to adapt to a rapidly changing world and to succeed in the futures they choose.

Friday and Saturday, Oct. 22-23, 8:15 a.m. to 4 p.m., Community Strategic Visioning Event that will support the development of a new district long range plan. Participation in this event will involve two full days of work.

What to expect at each session

- Each session includes small group discussions and time to summarize and share comments from those discussions with the large group. Skilled facilitators present questions and provide guidance during each session.
- Each session may vary depending upon the topic. Some may include knowledgeable guest speakers; some may include short video presentations or other means “to provide a baseline understanding of the topic at hand,” notes School Board President Ed Petersen. “We know there will be many perspectives, viewpoints and thoughts about each topic, and we expect the conversations to be lively and to help the board have a better understanding of what the community thinks about each topic.”
- Between 50 and 60 people are expected to gather for the *Work, Career, and College Ready* discussion and 200 for the Community Strategic Visioning Event.

Please contact us early if you are interested in attending so that we can prepare for your participation.

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