

...NewsLinks

A Web-based newsletter for the staff of Everett Public Schools

Oct. 21, 2010 (*NewsLinks* articles are now [archived on DocuShare](#))

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MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT – Enrollment status and commitment to keeping you informed

It seems like our classes are more full, and our buses are more full. It seems like our legislature keeps asking us to tighten our belts, or asking *us* to ask our *voters* to replace state funding for schools. It *seems* so, because it *is* so.

Through *NewsLinks*, over the next few weeks, I'll provide a picture of what we face after \$9 million in reductions in 2008, and \$3.8 million more reductions in 2009, how we're guarding against deeper cuts next year, how upcoming legislative proposals and actions may impact our work and funding, and the advocacy efforts we and our school board are making on behalf of students and schools.

Enrollment trend

This year, our Oct. 1 student headcount was 18,712 districtwide. This is 106 students fewer (or .006% less) than expected for the year. Compared to last year on Oct. 1, this year's enrollment is down 117 students.

This slight dip in enrollment follows several years of steady enrollment increases and three years of nearly flat student enrollment. The unstable local economy, rising number of home foreclosures and increased number of families facing employment layoffs combine to make it more difficult to project how many students are likely to register at each of our 26 schools. Therefore, it is also difficult to determine just how many staff members will be needed at which grade levels at what schools.

This year, 190 more high school students enrolled than we projected, but enrollment at elementary school fell short by 280 students. Those numbers made it more challenging to match staff to the classrooms, grade levels and to the schools where students enrolled. Schools and staffs responded swiftly and collaboratively (as is the culture in this district) to the challenge and helped iron out most of the staffing issues in the first weeks of school.

Remedies included moving some staff members from one school to another, opening several classrooms with substitutes and gradually hiring teachers as enrollment numbers stabilized. To address the variety of enrollment imbalances that we faced, we hired five classroom teachers more than originally budgeted for.

Throughout last year's legislative session and Fiscal Advisory Council process, (which resulted in our *Reduced Educational Plan*), we knew that class sizes would be tighter in 2010-11 than they have been in the past. There is less funding to support the class size goals we have been able to fund for so long.

Class size related to legislative action

Our legislature eliminated the remaining I-728 funds used for class size reduction and for targeted assistance for high school students. The legislature also cut a portion of the funding for lower K-4 class sizes. As a result, even though last year almost every elementary classroom in the district was at or below our goals, we now have classrooms above goal. This year we no longer have the additional funds to allocate to high schools to provide support classes, and thus, many of high school teachers have loads above goal also. As we conclude a few more allocations adjustments, I will share more information about staffing and enrollment.

Thanks to all for problem-solving together – now and in the future

I very much appreciate the cooperation and patience of each staff member as we work together through these and other funding-related difficulties to sustain our mission of supporting learning for each student.

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MEMORIALS ESTABLISHED – by friends and family of Jessica Otto and Ruth Winter

For Jessica

- Donate at any Bank of America branch (account # 12242103) in her memory to support University of Washington research of type 4 Ehlers-Danlos. This collection will take place through January 2011.
- Through the [Everett Public Schools Foundation](#), donate to the *Jessica Otto Memorial Fund* to help establish a lasting fund for classroom grants – this is because of Jessica's dedication to teaching and history of writing grants.

For Ruth

- Through the [Everett Public Schools Foundation](#), donate to the *Ruth Winter Memorial Book Fund* which will be used to buy books for Denney Youth Center students.

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SEVERE WINTER AHEAD? Such is the prediction

Scientists at the National Weather Service are predicting a Pacific Northwest winter that will be colder and wetter than normal. That prediction is based on sea surface temperatures in the Pacific Ocean, indicating that a strong La Nina phase has developed.

On average, October through December is expected to be both wetter and cooler than normal while January through March is forecast to be colder than normal.

So, what can you do? The Snohomish County Department of Emergency Management suggests to expect the worst and to be prepared. Stock up on extra food, medicine and other items you use regularly (cat and dog food? food for special diets?), keep gutters, drains and ditches free of leaves and debris, trim deadwood branches from trees and get yourself a good snow shovel.

What does this mean for school schedules? Because it's been awhile since we've had to close or delay school because of weather, check out the [emergency closure](#) information on the district website. Find out what a two-hour delay or cancellation of school for a day means by reading the [school program impact chart](#). This chart was published for each student in the [Student Rights and Responsibilities Handbook](#).

What does this mean for your work schedule? See what school delays or closures mean for each of the district's employee group's [responsibilities for reporting to work on such days](#).

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“REVIEWING” and “VISIONING” – What’s all the buzz?

Last week, a 22-member team from the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) visited the district for two days to conduct a district “Management Review.” WASA reviewers were joined by representatives of the Washington State School Directors’ Association (WSSDA) and Canfield & Associates, a school district insurance provider. While here, they fanned out across the district to visit and observe schools and support sites, and interview staff, association leaders, parents and community members. More than 150 individuals were interviewed, some more than one time, to discuss their role and their insights about how the district conducts the world's most important work.

This review is one of the largest ever conducted by those organizations and was requested by Dr. Cohn to provide an impartial analysis and report of district strengths and challenges.

“As we enter the final months of developing a new district strategic plan, and we prepare to endure another round of state budget cuts, this multifaceted look at our district by experienced professionals from around the state will be particularly useful,” said Cohn. The school board will receive the report in December, and our Fiscal Advisory Council will review it afterward.

The Oct. 22 and 23 [Visioning Event](#) is a major component of the community engagement and strategic plan process in which the district is deeply engaged. Serving as a kind of crescendo to months of school board community engagement meetings, Friday and Saturday's Visioning Event is intended to bring almost 200 people together. They will spend two days discussing and synthesizing information from the previous meetings and helping set the stage for a district plan to be set by the school board in the spring of 2011. Full details about the [strategic planning process](#) to date and what is ahead is on the Web – including [a letter of invitation Superintendent Cohn sent](#) to community members in August. Click on the [.wvm file](#) to view photographs from the community sessions held so far. (This is a large file, so it may take some time to open.)

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THANK YOU, SNOHOMISH HEALTH DISTRICT! For elementary school hand-washing kits

Each elementary school received a free hand-washing kit from the Snohomish Health District last month. The kits help teach students the importance of washing hands to prevent the spread of flu. Each kit includes an ultraviolet lamp and a lotion (pretend germs) that glows when placed under the lamp. Students rub a few drops of the lotion on their hands, wash their hands and then check for the “germs” that they missed. The activity helps teach that proper hand washing takes time and effort. The kit also includes a CD full of disease prevention information and teaching guides.

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NEWS AROUND THE DISTRICT – information about good work everywhere

- 10.21.2010 [District honored with William L. Hunter Point of Light Award](#)
- 10.21.2010 [View Ridge Elementary & North Middle schools visited by Taiwanese guests interested in special education](#)
- 10.18.2010 [Gateway Middle and Silver Lake Elementary schools in state's top 5%](#)
- 10.18.2010 [View Ridge Elementary PTA Wellness Committee says, "Let's walk!"](#)
- 10.12.2010 [Everett Public Schools granted nearly \\$1 million in energy grants](#)

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OPPORTUNITIES – for staff and students

1. Providence Regional Medical Center offers two great volunteer opportunities for high school students. Details are in this week's Principal Packet and [available online](#).
2. [Art Council of Snohomish County](#) provides a well rounded program of opportunities for students and teachers. Along with Outreach Suitcases, Student Art Competitions, and Field Trips, the Arts Council provides high quality professional development involving integrating art lessons into the elementary classroom.

The Arts Council is now accepting registrations for their fall workshop ***Merging Science with Art*** at Cascade High School on Oct. 29 and 30; registration is due Oct. 22. All workshops include a fee, but clock hours for Everett teachers are free. To register and to learn about all the Arts Council programs, please visit [their website](#).

3. **NAWIC's Construction Challenge 2011** – teams are forming now! Open to both female and male high school students. Register at www.constructionchallenge.org.
4. ***Mentoring Children of Promise (MCP)*** is a community-based mentoring program for children of parent(s) involved in the criminal justice system. MCP is looking for adult volunteers, 21 and over to share activities with such a child for eight hours a month. Mentors meet regularly with the child and offer friendship, support and guidance. Mentors make a minimum of a two year commitment. Mentors are matched to children who live in close proximity, have similar interests and are a good fit in terms of personality. MCP's greatest hope is to create matches that last a lifetime. Guidance and support is offered to matches and families during times of crisis and moments of success.

Many MCP children have experienced loss. To ensure that mentors are positive role models, mentor candidates are screened carefully by requiring an application with three references and a complete background check, DMV check, social security trace, in-home interview and four hour training session. To learn more, email [Joell Coltrane](#) or call 425-259-2973 ext. 2717

5. **March of Dimes Nurse of the Year nominations** – Know an outstanding school nurse to nominate for the March of Dimes *Nurse of the Year* awards? Complete a [nomination form](#) and **submit by Nov. 1**. For more information, contact Christina Frazier at 206-624-1373 ext. 21.

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KEY DATES FOR NEXT SCHOOL YEAR – [important dates and celebrations](#) you won't want to miss planning for now!

POLICY & PROCEDURE INFO – links to [all policies and procedures are online](#)

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