

## News release



Everett Public Schools

**March 4, 2011**

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### **March is important month for school district budget setting**

***Key dates include March 17 state revenue forecast and district meetings, March 7, 9, and 29.***

***District seeks public [opinion online](#) between now and 4 p.m. on Friday, March 11.***

#### Fiscal Advisory Council wrestling with December legislative decision and state cuts in process

The school district's Fiscal Advisory Council (FAC) is in its third month of meetings this year. Most of the parents, members of the business community, students and staff on the FAC are serving a second year in this group which helps bring representative perspective and knowledge into the district's challenge of setting a school district budget. Last year, the FAC deliberations helped determine \$3.7 million in cuts the district made as a result of state funding cuts. Those included reducing school busing services for approximately 1,500 students. The FAC is wrestling with the possibility of cutting as much as \$5 million for next school year, based upon early legislative decisions already made and those being discussed now.

State cuts for 2010-11 have continued to be a topic for the legislative session now in progress. But cuts to K-12 education took an unprecedented and early turn for the worst even before the official 2011 legislative session began.

On Dec. 11, 2010, before their regular session was to begin in January, legislators held an early session and agreed to deep funding cuts for schools. Those were not just cuts to be made in the future, but were imposed on schools for the school year now in session – in spite of all state districts having approved budgets on record with the state. For Everett, the December cuts sliced \$6 million from the current school year's existing budget.

"Those December decisions mean school districts are right now working on two tracks," notes Executive Director of Business and Finance Jeff Moore. "We are adjusting spending this year, determining what resources we can use a year ahead of time, AND, in Everett, we are working with the FAC to determine how to continue providing quality education for students, knowing more budget cuts are likely for next school year."

On March 17, the school district and all others closely watching the legislative budget process will hear important information from the Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council when their quarterly economic and revenue forecast is released.

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“Depending upon that economic forecast, school districts and state residents will either see some hope for relief or will continue to tighten belts. For schools, ‘belt tightening’ means fewer student services,” stated Moore. “In Everett, we have been for several years, ‘working for the best and preparing for the worst.’ Without the community’s approval of the district’s August request for a Temporary Supplemental Educational Program and Operations Levy, we would be preparing for even deeper cuts for next school year.”

#### Public opinions sought online

To help the FAC do their work, the district today launched an online survey, seeking public thought about some possible reductions. The survey is open through Friday, March 11 at 4 p.m.

#### Public meetings March 7 and 9

Working with Gov. Chris Gregoire’s December budget and cost/revenue projects now in hand, the FAC plans to bring draft budget recommendations to the public on March 7 and 9 in two separate meetings, both starting at 6:30 p.m. Each meeting will help the FAC complete their budget recommendations for school year 2011-12, before those recommendations are presented to Superintendent Gary Cohn.

1. Monday, March 7, Evergreen Middle School, at 7621 Beverly Lane, Everett
2. Wednesday, March 9, Heatherwood Middle School, at 1419 Trillium Blvd. SE, Mill Creek

#### School board special budget input meeting, March 29

Starting at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 29, in the board room of the Educational Service Center at 4730 Colby Ave., Everett, board members will meet one-on-one with those who wish to speak to the budget recommendations the board will then have in hand. The week earlier, March 22, Superintendent Cohn will present his recommendations to the board, based upon the work of the FAC. Before the board continues with its budget-setting process, they have set March 29 as a time to hear personally and directly about the budget proposals from district citizens.

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