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Subject: Welcome Back ... to Levy & Bond Season!
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Good morning, and welcome back from your Thanksgiving holiday! I hope you had a great weekend, and thoroughly enjoyed the Seahawks and Apple Cup games (unless you're a Cougar, then not so much, eh?). Now that you're back, I need your attention for a few moments on a topic that is critical to our success: our [Replacement Educational Programs and Operations \(EP&O\) Levy](#) and a [Capital Bond](#).

Last Tuesday evening when our school board authorized a Capital Bond and Replacement Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy for a [Feb. 13, 2018](#) ballot, they made a decision for which they've been preparing and studying, and with which they wrestled, since 2016 when voters approved that year's Capital Bond and Capital Levy.

Last Tuesday's decision was a BIG one, and it's very important each of us understand the short- and long-term implications of both of those ballot issues. Why is this Capital Bond decision so important? Here's an overview of why (more details are on the [website](#); with more information to come between now and Feb. 13, 2018, and you can read Jerry Cornfield's summary in today's [Daily Herald](#)):

1. The Capital Bond is all about **Future Readiness** in three areas:

- **Growth Readiness** – building enough classrooms and additional schools for the 1,600 students coming to our district in the next 10 years. That includes a fourth comprehensive high school and 36 permanent classroom additions (not portables) to elementary schools around the district to accommodate growth and to lower class size.
- **Career Readiness** – incorporating high tech STEM learning labs and training centers (some of our voters will know these facilities by the term vocational labs) into each of our high schools. This means modernizing sections of our existing schools and building the new high school to incorporate such a program.
 - o Everett High's vocational building will become a center for medical professions and careers.
 - o Cascade High's science building will be modernized and expanded to incorporate aerospace and advanced manufacturing.
 - o Jackson High will have some classrooms retrofitted for communications and information technology.
 - o High School No. 4's learning labs will focus on energy and sustainability.
- **Facilities Readiness** – ensuring existing school HVAC and electrical systems are well-kept and updated so those facilities are protected as community investments. And taking on major modernization of Everett High's aging cafeteria so its students and its

community can make full and long-term use of an area that is the “heart” of the school.

2. Why is the Replacement EP&O Levy so important? Because the existing Levy will expire at the end of 2018, AND because the EP&O makes up the difference between the full cost of operating schools and what the state pays to operate those schools.

Costs not fully covered by the state include early learning, summer school, extended day programs, teaching materials and equipment, transportation, music, art, drama, athletics and extracurricular activities, special education, professional development, competitive staff salaries, gifted programs, and ongoing facilities maintenance.

You will likely hear more conversation and questions than usual about the EP&O Levy this year. That additional conversation is expected because of the Legislature’s late summer decision to raise state property taxes as a way to fully fund schools. Some Legislators have said this state tax increase has “fixed school funding” and eliminated the need for local levies.

However, the Supreme Court ruled earlier this month “not so fast.” While the Legislature has made some progress toward fully funding schools, Legislative work in that area is not fully complete. The Supreme Court is continuing to fine the Legislature \$100,000 per day until it comes up with a way to fully cover the cost of operating schools. (I encourage you to read the NEWS, [OSPI](#), [WEA](#), [WASA](#), [Seattle Times](#), [Daily Herald](#), or numerous other sources reporting or commenting on the Legislature falling short of the mark.)

The Legislature begins that work again in January, and we all look forward to more progress toward fully fund the state’s schools. In the meantime, Everett and many other school districts in the state face operating levies that expire at the end of 2018. That so many Washington school districts are asking for local levy support from their voters demonstrates there is more work to be done by the Legislature to eliminate the need for local EP&O levies. Rather than risk waiting for the Legislature to fully fix the funding gap now filled by EP&O levies across Washington, many districts including Everett will place those key funding measures on the Feb. 13, 2018 ballot. In our case, it is accompanied by a Capital Bond.

The time between now and the election is short; made more so because in that window of time we also will be enjoying the holidays and celebrating the new year. ***I urge you to carve out a bit of time to become familiar with the ballot issues so you can answer questions you might get from friends or neighbors.*** If you don’t know the answers to those questions, refer people to the website or have them send questions to BondandLevy@everettsd.org.

You and I know this work we do together is difficult, and it is time-consuming and demands a great deal of our energy. I also know, and hope you do too, how important Capital Bond and replacement EP&O Levy funding is to the quality of our schools, and the differences those funding streams will make for students now and long into the future.

As we return from the holiday and gear up again for our students, thank you for taking the time to get up to speed on our levy and bond, and welcome back to school! Best regards,

Gary



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