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Subject: What's Next for Our Capital Bond?
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Good morning! What a beautiful March day it is today! I hope your weekend was relaxing, and the week has started well for you and those who work with you.

Today I'm writing with message of deep gratitude for our communities' support of the replacement Educational Programs & Operations Levy (55.35 percent "yes"), which the legislature now calls an enrichment levy. While these levies have typically passed with 60 to 65 percent approval ratings, we have seen a depression of approval ratings across the county unlike what most of us have experienced before. Later this evening, we'll be presenting some of that information to our school board, and you'll be able to see it in [BoardDocs](#).

When last I wrote to you, we had in hand the very first night's returns from our Capital Bond and Replacement EP&O Levy ballot measures the evening of February 13. When writing that message, I held to a glimmer of hope that our Bond results might climb above the 60 percent supermajority required to pass. That was not to be. The final bond tally was 55.44 percent "yes" and 44.56 percent "no." It would have taken another 2,700 yes voters to turn out for that measure to pass. Nevertheless, I am determined, and hope you join me in that determination, **not** to allow the Bond disappointment to dampen my spirits.

We've been asked about running another Capital Bond in April. This will not happen. Friday, February 23, was the county's deadline for placing a measure on the April ballot. A deadline that close to the February election does not permit adequate processing of the results in order to determine next steps. Our school board experienced this in 2014 when we ran two bonds within two months of each other. By the way, I don't see us being able to either process the results or organize alternatives for an August election either.

Four years ago, the February 2014 Capital Bond request came achingly close to passing with 58.13 percent approval. We ran that Capital Bond again two months later in April 2014. That second try earned more approval (58.63 percent), but not the required 60 percent. After hundreds of hours of meetings and community engagement activities, including surveys, we ran a smaller Capital Bond in April 2016 which earned 62.23 percent approval. That 2016 voter approval is making it possible to build Elementary #18, remodel North Middle and Woodside Elementary. (Voters also approved a Capital Levy in April 2016, which is paying for the 1:1 laptop implementation, and much of our school safety and security upgrades.)

You know as well as I that the district's exceptional growth is not erased by the February election results. We are still the fastest growing district in the county. Our challenge now is how best to manage the ways we use existing classroom space and more portables to provide the best education possible for the students here now and coming to us in the future.

So what's next? The board will be presented the final Bond and Levy election results and will have a

discussion about the results at tonight's board meeting. This March 6 meeting is the first time the board has been together in a regular school board session since before the February 13 election. They have asked us to prepare materials for them to use to discuss the election results; to begin to understand what motivated more voters to say "no" this time than the district has experienced in decades; and to weigh various options for responding to the continuing growth at Jackson and Cascade high schools.

Facilities and planning staff regularly met with school principals all year to monitor enrollment, inventory school spaces and plan for 2018-19 students. Now those meetings and planning sessions will look out even longer into the future as the relief we hoped for from the February Bond is off the table.

Facilities and planning staff are also focused on projects from the 2016 Capital Bond. You can follow that work on the [2016 Capital Projects](#) website. Some of the 2016 Capital Bond highlights follow:

- March 1 was the deadline for contractors to submit bids to build [Elementary 18](#). You will begin seeing construction for that school in May. Elementary 18 should open its doors to its first group of students the first day of school in fall 2019. We can thank 2016 voters for helping make that school possible and for the overcrowding relief it will provide our southern schools.
- The [elementary boundary committee](#) (always a necessary part of building new schools) started work last November. Their task is to recommend which neighborhoods will send students to Elementary 18. They are also tasked with balancing enrollment at the other southern region elementary schools. You can follow the boundary committee's work online and learn when it will hold public meetings about boundary recommendations. About 150 attended the group's first two public input sessions, and we can expect more interest as they near the end of their work this spring. Having new boundaries approved by fall 2018 means families at all the schools involved have a year to plan before the new elementary opens in fall 2019.
- The same time Elementary 18 is set to open, fall 2019, much of [North Middle School](#) will be remodeled. By 2020, North will be completely remodeled. Work at North officially begins when school ends this coming June. Construction also continues during the 2018-19 school year. Because students will attend school during next school year's construction, you will see portables delivered at North this spring. Students and staff will use those portables while some parts of the school are being torn down and rebuilt. The district issues calls for construction bids on North this spring.

Yes, many of us are disappointed at the Capital Bond election results. I do not "know" the cause of voter negativity in February, but it was widespread in the Puget Sound region – not just in our district. In general, Puget Sound districts saw as much as 10 percent drops in historic approval ratings for both bonds and levies. A deep dive into the cause for regionalized voter angst is likely already underway and will take some time to unravel.

While all of that could be a “downer,” disappointment is quickly forgotten when we see the wonderful results coming from our schools and support operations teams. Thanks again to so many of you who spent hours and energy volunteering to help tell the Bond and Levy stories – and yet still kept your heart in this important work and your faith in the future.

With warmest regards,

Gary



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