

Waggoner, Mary

From: Waggoner, Mary
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...NewsLinks

Special Edition

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

April 14, 2010 *Special Edition* (NewsLinks articles are now [archived on DocuShare](#))

MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT – Legislative decisions mean better-than-expected news for this district

On Monday, we had our fingers crossed that the legislature would conclude its work by the wee hours of Tuesday morning. We also hoped legislators would protect, as much as possible, K-12 funding.

Indeed, the legislature did finish its work early yesterday, and early information about their decisions is better than we expected. Although full details are not yet available, I want to share with you what we do know now.

1. Funding for K-3 class size enhancement was saved. You may remember that Washington school districts have received K-4 class size enhancement funding for many years. Earlier in this legislative session, amidst statewide dismay, legislative proposals sought to eliminate that funding entirely. Ultimately, legislators preserved 73% of that funding (which is equal to 23 teaching positions).

This portion of the class size enhancement funding combined with the current pace of retirements, leaves and resignations, means that we will not be forced into a RIF process for 2010-11 for certificated instructional staff members with continuing contracts.

2. Two years ago, we received \$8.1 million in voter-approved I-728 funds. This school year, as a result of last year's state budget cuts, the district received just \$2.3 million. During this year's legislative session, I-728 was eliminated entirely for next school year.

Combined with other state funding cuts, this total elimination of I-728 funding means more classrooms throughout the district will be closer to class size goals than we've experienced in the past.

Approved by voters in 2000, I-728 funding has varied from year to year, depending upon the state's economy. However, every school district in the state came to rely upon those "Student Achievement Funds" as the amounts grew over time. In Everett Public Schools, I-728 funding has been instrumental in paying for class size reductions and strategic instructional support which have helped improve our graduation rate and systematically improve student achievement K-12.

To have I-728 completely eliminated is a devastating blow to this district and to K-12 education in the state.

3. The state is no longer paying for a day of professional development for certificated staff. In addition to losing I-728 professional development dollars, the state has completely eliminated the last remaining one of what used to be three professional development days for certificated instructional staff.
4. During 2010-11 and perhaps into future years, we will be living with the impacts of past budget cuts – more than \$13 million in the last two years alone. As you know, our paraeducators, custodians, help desk and field technicians, facilitators and administrators were deeply impacted by cuts implemented this school year. We now have fewer direct services to schools.

Facing approximately \$4 million in additional cuts for next school year, budget considerations include proposals to increase athletic fees and lunch prices, revise transportation and reduce hours of operation for administrative services offices, which will mean fewer service hours for schools and families (More details about the potential budget impacts are outlined in the [Fiscal Advisory Council report](#) which was released on March 26 and was the topic of a [letter distributed to you](#) by your supervisors).

5. Classified staffing ratio remains the same. Earlier legislative proposals sought to cut funding for classified staff support, forcing us to consider deep classified cuts again this year. The legislature has wisely preserved the funding formula for classified staff. We will not need to reduce costs in this area as deeply as last year, but we will be shortening some work hours and reducing some noncertificated and administrative positions to reduce costs.
6. All day kindergarten funding was saved! This is a huge victory for students and families and for all of us. This means we can continue to offer state funded full day kindergarten programs at Garfield and Hawthorne, thus giving them an early, sound academic and social foundation upon which to build success for their years in our schools.
7. Local Effort Assistance (LEA) is preserved. While this does not restore much funding for our district, it was "the right thing" for the legislature to do because it helps balance the inequity that exists between rich and poor

school districts.

We worked diligently with our legislators to preserve this funding. Other districts will benefit from our work and from the work of K-12 leadership statewide.

A little bit of history, some next steps and a “thank you”

You may remember that we began wrestling with budget issues last fall when the state’s economic conditions clearly indicated that all state programs were facing budget cuts.

When the governor released her first budget in December, we swallowed hard and began looking at ways to cut \$7 million from next year’s budget. I convened the Fiscal Advisory Council (FAC) which worked for three months to recommend ways to make responsible, balanced budget cuts. I asked the FAC to recommend ways we could absorb the cuts the state was aiming directly at classrooms, and do so in ways that lessened the impact on student learning.

Working throughout the legislative session, the FAC issued its final report after a series of public meetings. Essentially, the FAC report laid out three budget reduction pictures – one for \$3 million in cuts, another for \$5 million and a final one laying out \$7 million in cost reductions.

Tuesday’s legislative decisions require approximately \$4 million in budget reductions for this district – well within the projections we made and the scope of FAC recommendations.

On April 20, the school board will consider Resolution 989 for a *Reduced Educational Program* (REP). Required by law, this resolution, will authorize and direct me to make program and budget decisions that ensure the district’s fiscal stability as we make final budget preparations for 2010-11.

Next, the board will hold a budget hearing on June 22 during its regularly scheduled meeting. The board is scheduled to adopt the district budget for 2010-11 at its regular July 6 meeting.

Has the budget “roller coaster” become a regular ride?

Unfortunately, the annual budget roller coaster of uncertainty is likely to be routine for school districts and other state agencies – at least until the state’s economy fully recovers, or our state revises its tax structure and fully, consistently funds basic education in Washington.

The roller coaster’s uncertainty could be unsettling and demoralizing, and some might expect the budget drama played out in Olympia to impact the work we do each day to help students learn. Thank you for not letting that happen!

Each visit I make to a school or support operation confirms how professional, dedicated and focused Everett Public Schools staff are.

Thank you for not being distracted by the roller coaster and for maintaining your daily focus on every child. Ultimately, only you can ensure that each student has a quality learning and growth experience every day.

Everett Public Schools complies with all federal and state rules and regulations and does not discriminate on the basis of race, creed, color, national origin, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, age, veteran status, or disability. This holds true for all students who are interested in participating in educational programs and/or extracurricular school activities. Inquiries regarding compliance and/or grievance procedures may be directed to the school district's Affirmative Action Officer, Title IX Officer, ADA District Coordinator, or Section 504 Coordinator. Affirmative Action Officer, Carol Stolz, 3715 Oakes Ave., Everett WA 98201, 425-385-4106, Title IX Officer, Randi Seaberg, 3715 Oakes Ave., Everett WA 98201, 425-385-4104, ADA Coordinator, Kristine McDowell, 202 Alder St., Everett WA 98203, 425-385-5250, Section 504 Coordinator, Becky Ballbach, 4730 Colby Ave., Everett WA 98203, 425-385-4086.