

From: [Cohn, Gary](#)
To: [EPS.MailList](#)
Subject: October News & Heads-up
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Attachments: [image002.png](#)

Dear Colleague:

Good morning! What a great start to the year we have enjoyed! There has been so much wonderful work going on inside and outside our classrooms, and so many accomplishments and superb examples of going the extra mile for students, that I realize I can't compliment everything in this email. But I would like to thank you, because you have had an impact on student learning and student success.

Examples of Great Wins

- **Our students outperform the state again!** Even with the challenges of growth, and a student population with growing needs, our focus on continuous improvement is evident in test scores. In every subject and grade level tested, our student scores met or exceeded the state performance.
- Our **technology team** did an amazing job facilitating the 1:1 [device rollout](#) at Cascade and Everett high schools and Cedar Wood, Jackson, and Whittier elementary schools. Now all four high schools and six elementaries are launched in our 1:1 environment.
- In September, **140 new teachers** gathered to learn about the **TPEP evaluation system** and receive further support in their new roles. It was the first of four trainings scheduled through February and an important part of helping our new colleagues experience success with their students.
- Our **enrollment** projection turned out to be amazingly accurate again this year. We planned on 20,088 and our October enrollment is 20,079! That is accuracy within .045 percent!
- Video intercom systems were installed in 18 schools to improve [security and safety](#) for our students and staff. As additional security measures, Cedar Wood, Mill Creek, Penny Creek and Silver Firs elementary schools also received remodeled entry ways.
- [Elementary 18](#) construction is well underway and on schedule! This week we will be starting a naming process that involves the community in suggesting potential names.
- [North Middle School](#) has also seen tremendous progress as the foundation is laid and the infrastructure is rising from that foundation. It is exciting to see how the school is integrating the development into teaching plans like using the blueprints for math lessons.

Financial Stewardship

There is much more to celebrate, including our recent financial recognitions. Everett Public Schools has a long record of strong financial management. This fall, we are honored to have once again been awarded a [Certificate of Excellence](#) from the Association of School Business Officials International. Only three other school districts in Washington earned the award this year.

In addition, Everett Public Schools has earned one of the highest bond ratings in the state for public schools. Moody's upgraded the district's rating in 2016 from Aa2 to Aa1. This September, Standard and Poor's affirmed their AA+/stable long-term credit rating of the district. Great ratings translate

into better interest rates which equals savings for taxpayers.

Superior financial stewardship is cumulative. It is built over the long haul, and allows the district to continue to spend more money on teaching and teaching support (teachers, paraeducators, teacher-librarians, supplies, health services, etc.) than most school districts our size. For example, in 2016-17 the district spent [73.5 percent of its budget](#) on teaching in 2016-17 compared to the average of 71.4 percent.

Budget Challenge

This exceptional financial management prepared us well as we face new budget challenges this year. Although the Legislature provided extra funding for school employee compensation this year through the McCleary decision, legislators also reduced the amount school districts could collect through the local operating levy. This reduction, if not fixed in the upcoming legislative session, will result in a significant shortfall in the district's 2019-20 budget. The shortfall will make it necessary to develop some aggressive budget cuts this spring, as we have been seeing in other Washington school districts. Until we know what the Legislature does this winter, it will be hard to know what the district's exact budget shortfall will be.

The school board and I are advocating with legislators, and I will provide you further updates as new developments occur. The school board's legislative priorities are:

- **Modify the levy cap**, which was reduced by the legislature to \$1,500 per student from the voter-approved \$2,500.
- **Reinstate a statewide salary mix factor** to fairly fund basic education salaries based upon teacher experience and education.
- **Fully fund special education** by increasing the per-student funding and reducing the threshold to access safety net funding.
- **Fully fund the new School Employees Benefit Board (SEBB)** system, which is scheduled to take over benefits administration in January 2020.

These McCleary-related "fixes" are essential for school districts to avoid substantial budget reductions going into next year and the year following. Stay tuned for more budget information as it is available. Thank you for all you do every day to improve student learning and success.

Best regards,

Gary



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