

# Everett School Employee Benefit Trust

Trustees: Mike Gunn John W. Morrill Molly Ringo Elizabeth Selders

Susan Lindsey, Chair David Jones, Secretary

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April 4, 2011

To all employees eligible for benefits through the ESEBT (Everett Schools Employee Benefit Trust)

As your trustees, we are writing to inform you of possible legislative action in Olympia that may negatively impact your benefits as an employee of Everett Public Schools and to urge you to express your concern about this to your state representatives.

**Senate Bill 5612**, written and submitted by Senators Steve Hobbs, Rodney Tom and Mark Schoesler, would require that all K-12 public school employees be covered by the benefits provided by the State of Washington. Your trustees believe this bill, if ultimately passed, will negatively affect the health benefit coverage currently available to ESEBT members, including medical, dental, vision, group term life and group long term disability insurance.

Your Everett School Employee Benefit Trust has historically provided greater benefits at a lower cost per employee than is available to many employees in other school districts. If this law passes we anticipate the following:

- Loss of local control over your benefits
- Loss of your current option to choose your health care providers
- Loss of your current ability to select from among the five different coverage plans and rates currently available through the ESEBT
- Elimination of programs such as the Wellness Program, disability coverage, dental coverage, supplemental life insurance, and the Employee Assistance Program.

As we know the legislature is faced with significant challenges to balance the budget for the next biennium. Some legislators are trying to balance the budget by reducing the current benefits provided to public school employees. There are various conflicting reports regarding potential savings to the state and, as many of you know, comparing benefit plans is complicated. One independent study has found that this proposed legislation would actually cost the state an additional \$640-\$680 million if the state were to provide the same level of benefits that are currently negotiated at a local level. Other studies portray a savings apparently due to a reduced level of benefits.

Since 1985 the Everett School Employee Benefit Trust has consistently shown itself to be a responsible and frugal manager of the funds available for employee benefits. The Trust has worked hard to offer plans and services that are responsive to our employees' needs. Most recently the Trust has recognized the importance of wellness programs to contain health care costs, but also to enhance the personal lives of our employees. Our Trust is a model for other

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districts, and our level of benefits is higher and less expensive than many districts. We strongly urge you to contact your representatives in Olympia to express your opinions on this potential change.