

Ron Thiele, Superintendent

March 23, 2016

Dear Senator Hill,

As Chair of the Senate Ways and Means Committee, we, the Issaquah School District Board of Directors beseech you to support a one year extension of the levy lid through 2018 during this special session.

While we are certain you and the Legislature will continue to work very hard during the 2017 legislative session to solve the funding concerns set forth by the Supreme Court, your work will not be done in time to prevent a \$7 million dollar single year shortfall (\$14 million for the biennium) in budget planning for the Issaquah School District, requiring us to take the dramatic steps of notifying staff and teachers of potential layoffs.

We assure you it is our intent to plan and prepare the best we can as a district, once a final funding plan is approved by the Legislature to resolve the Supreme Court's findings to amply fund education. In the meantime, we simply ask that you hold current funding levels as they are. Let us respond to the final funding outcome and not be forced into interim changes because of the timing of a few months.

The Issaquah School District is growing by approximately 400 - 500 new students per year and we expect an additional enrollment bump with full day kindergarten on top of that this next year. As our budget requirements are significantly increasing to serve the needs of our students, it is clear a \$7 million dollar loss even for an interim period, would have dramatic consequences for our students.

One more year of funding at the current levy level will give us the stability we need to plan our 2017-2018 school year staffing based on needs, not on where cuts would have the least impact. We will be able to hire in a very competitive market in the spring of 2017, and not in late summer right before school starts, while trying to recover from any reduction in workforce loss as well as meet additional staffing needs due to our growth.

As you and the rest of the Legislature do your work in the spring of 2017, we would like to do ours relying on stable funding for 2017 - 2018. We want to support your work during the 2017 session to get to a final resolution for funding education and spend our energy planning and preparing for that future, rather than spending our spring cutting \$7 million from our budget, which may or may not really be gone by fall, but have an impact on our ability to staff either way.

Please support and represent the interests of the Issaquah School District and all the districts and students across the State of Washington by supporting the levy lid extension bill HB2698.

Respectfully,
Issaquah School District Board of Directors

Suzanne Weaver, Board President

Lisa Callan

Marnie Maraldo

Harlan Gallinger

Anne Moore

Board of Directors

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