

February 23, 2009

Dear Community Members;

I need to share important information with you about our district's projected budget for next year.

We like all school districts across the nation are facing large state budget cuts that will go into effect next school year. Currently, together with the school board, administrators and principals we are planning for the impact of those cuts. Additionally, this is the usual time that we evaluate student enrollment projections and staffing projections for next school year. Our projection data indicates that our district will be impacted by an estimated 2% enrollment decrease.

Here are some important facts for you to know-

Our state funding is driven by the number of students attending our schools so we will be developing our 2009-2010 budget based on a 2% decrease in funding driven by enrollment alone.

Federal funding pays for a percentage of special education, vocational programs, disability programs, ELL (English Language Learners) and food service programs and special grants. There is a possibility that the proposed federal stimulus package will provide additional support for these programs.

We know the Governor's budget that was proposed at the beginning of the year was based on a \$5 billion dollar deficit; we know now that those projections are raising and have grown to \$7-8 Billion dollar deficit over the next biennium. With that said, the Governor's cuts to education would affect our district as follows:

I-728: This initiative provides support for lower class size and enriched curriculum and instruction. Lake Stevens schools received just over \$3 million dollars which supported lower class size, enrichment classes, extended learning for students, curriculum adoptions, professional development for teachers and principals, and early childhood education. Projected 25% cut.

I-732: This initiative provided cost of living raises to teachers funded by the state. The COLA is not funded in the Governor's budget.

Reduction of Levy Equalization: The state provides financial support to school districts throughout the state that have a lower tax base to collect levy funds from, also known as "property-poor" districts. We currently receive \$1.8 million dollars in equalization support. This support would be cut by 33% in the Governor's budget.

K-12 Program Reduction: Reduction, suspension, or elimination of funding in a number of K-12 programs which is estimated to decrease funding to our district by nearly \$900,000.

Just based on the Governor's budget alone, we are planning for budget cuts of \$2.1 million dollars for 2009-10 school year.

These are difficult times for all of us, and I promise to you that as we collectively make decisions we will do our best to keep major impacts away from students in the classroom, to save jobs and to communicate openly and honestly with you.

We will provide up-to-date budget information on our website and you may also sign up there to be included in a list serve. From time to time we will electronically send out important information on a variety of topics about our school district.

I encourage you to be involved as decisions are made in Olympia. I am in constant contact with our legislators to provide supporting information about how decisions will impact our schools.

My door is always open to you.

Sincerely,

David C. Burgess, Ed.D.

Superintendent