

Renton School District works to prepare budget for 2008-09 school year

District seeks staff and community input at community meetings

January 8, 2008—The Renton School District is working to prepare its balanced budget for the 2008-09 school year. The process begins early this year to prepare for the continued impact of unfunded and underfunded requirements mandated by state and federal governments.

The district is seeking input from district staff on priorities and focus for the budget. Parents and community members are also asked to participate at community sessions at any of three meetings next week.

Next year's budget process—like the one to prepare this school year's budget—grapples with ever-increasing demands from the state and federal governments that do not come with additional funding. Renton, like districts throughout the state, will be required to make budget reductions of about 2.5 percent, or \$3 million.

Last year, districts throughout the state reduced their budgets due to those unfunded mandates, as well as inflation, by an average of 4 to 6 percent. The Renton School District reduced its budget by \$5.2 million (4.2 percent).

Examples of unfunded mandates and budget challenges include:

- The state does not pay salaries for all teachers and support staff
- The state only funds five of a student's (state-mandated) six-period school day
- The district must pay \$2 million of its local levy funding for school bus transportation
- Increased costs in fuel, heating, lighting, utilities, food and construction materials

The district budget will maintain a focus on improved learning for all students as well as preparing the class of 2008 for graduation and passing the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

District remains committed to placing funding priorities on research-proven programs that best meet the needs of all students.

School districts in Washington state are financed from three sources: federal, state and local (levy) funding. Local levy funds make up about 25 percent of the district's annual budget and are necessary due to inadequate state funding of education. Local levy funding must have voter approval to continue.

On March 11, the district will place before voters three important funding measures including an Education Replacement Levy to replace one approved by voters in 2004 and expires this year in December. Local levies pay to maintain educational programs and activities for all students as well as teacher salaries, classroom materials, textbooks, support staff, building maintenance, transportation, athletics and more.

For more information, please call the district's Community Relations Office at 425.204.2345 or visit www.renton.wednet.edu.

Renton School District Community Budget Meetings:

- Wednesday, Jan. 16, 6 p.m.,
Renton High School Commons,
400 S 2nd St, Renton
- Thursday, Jan. 17, 6 p.m.,
Hazen High School Career
Center, 1101 Hoquiam Ave NE,
Renton
- Monday, Jan. 28, 6 p.m.,
Lindbergh High School Library,
16426 128th Ave SE, Renton