**FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS**

**A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT - FEBRUARY 2018 LEVY UPDATE**

Welcome to spring! Here in the ISD, we have been working since the passage of our Two-Year Educational Programs and Operations Renewal Levy of February, 2018 to implement the new programs included in the levy. We sincerely thank our community for their support and would like to take this opportunity to provide an update on our progress. Within this report, you will learn how we are delivering on our levy promises to develop:

- High School Schedules that create opportunities for acceleration, exploration, and remediation
- An Elementary Dual Language Program
- More Academic Guidance Counseling
- Increased Mental Health Counseling
- Safety Enhancements

Our levies also support our Classified Staff including paraeducators, custodians, maintenance workers, and many more vital members of our staff who make school happen.

For a full list of levy-funded items, please visit the ISD website. Information about all three 2018 Renewal Levies (EP&O, School Bus, and Capital Levy) approved by voters is available on our website at bit.ly/ISDlevy2018 or by scanning the QR code below.

Sincerely,

Ron Thiele
Superintendent

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**ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION — ALL IN FOR KIDS**

Happy Spring! Thankfully spring is in the air after a long and challenging winter! As with the change in seasons, we look forward to continuing to plant new seeds for student growth and to nurturing our students and their families. We know that student success is personal and every student needs to follow their own path. The Issaquah Schools Foundation recognizes these unique needs and works in close partnership with the Issaquah School District to offer a variety of programs that open the doors to opportunities that inspire students. The Foundation is proud of the programs it has been able to seed and looks forward to diverse and new ideas that come our direction.

We hope that you have been inspired by some of these programs:

- **After School Academic Programs, 7th period and open libraries** offer students the opportunity to get one-on-one help from a teacher in a quiet setting.
- **The Fine Arts Fund** provides support for band, orchestra, choir, theater, and visual arts programs that encourage artistic expression, collaboration, and self-development.
- **Cultural Bridges** helps build relationships between families from diverse cultures through outreach, events, mentoring, and a magazine offered in 6 languages.
- **Teacher Grants** nurture innovation and help staff to think big, encourage divergent thinking, take risks, and develop learning environments that skillfully engage every student.

We are grateful for all our volunteers, donors and community partners. You are key to ensuring student success. This spring, help us prepare our students to be confident, competent and future-ready. Please join us at our annual Nourish Every Mind Luncheon or Breakfast to raise funds that directly benefit Issaquah School District students.

Learn more about Foundation funded programs and how your support is KEY to student success! Visit [http://isfdn.org/nourish-every-mind](http://isfdn.org/nourish-every-mind) to register and find more information about our events.

- **Luncheon**, Friday, May 3, 2019 - 12:00 – 1:00 pm at Meydenbauer Center in Bellevue
- **Breakfast**, Tuesday, May 14, 2019 - 7:30 – 8:30 am at Eastside Church in Issaquah
- **Online Auction** available April 19-29, 2019 at [http://isfdn.org/auction](http://isfdn.org/auction)

With gratitude and appreciation,

Cornell Atwater
Acting Executive Director

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**NEW DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM WILL HELP STUDENTS BECOME BILITERATE, BILINGUAL AND BICULTURAL**

**DUAL LANGUAGE**

Picture this: A classroom of five and six-year-olds. Some speak English at home, and some speak Spanish at home. But in school, they all speak both. A science lesson in English is followed by a social studies lesson in Spanish. Students from different backgrounds talk and play together in each other’s language, while making both languages their own.

That scene will become real next school year, as the District’s Dual Language Immersion Program launches at Clark Elementary and Issaquah Valley Elementary. Here’s how the program will work:

- **24 students at Issaquah Valley Elementary and 24 students at Clark Elementary** will start the program together.
- **Half of each group will come from families that speak English at home, and half from families that speak Spanish.**
- **The students will learn the same curriculum as all other kindergarteners in the District, but they’ll spend half the time learning in English and half the day in Spanish.**
- **Students will continue with the Dual Language Program as they advance through elementary school.**

Research has consistently shown that learning a second language offers many benefits for young children and that early childhood is the best time to start learning a second language. Learning more than one language provides students:

- An advantage working in a global society.
- Improved cognitive ability and brain development.
- An appreciation and understanding of diverse cultures.

**PMHS DUAL LANGUAGE IMMERSION PROGRAM**

Enrolled students who speak Spanish at home will better be able to maintain their first language as they grow up in an English-speaking culture, said Stefani Terry, a teacher in the program at Clark.

And the program will show students that their native culture and language are also valuable, said Savannah Williams, a teacher in the program at Issaquah Valley Elementary.

“I’m excited,” Terry said. “The program will build not just language, but empathy and a global world view that is crucial for kids as they’re navigating this world.”

For more information on the Dual Language Immersion Program, check out the ISD website or watch the Dual Language Program video on our YouTube channel by scanning the QR code below.

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**FROM THE ISSAQUAH PTSA COUNCIL**

To all our new families from around the country and the world:

Welcome to the Issaquah School District! The Issaquah PTSA Council invites you into our community.

Did you know...?

Public education is not free. We all have to work together to ensure the success of our students.

Federal funds comprise approximately 2% of District revenue. This money funds supplemental special education programs, Head Start, Title I, and free and reduced lunches in the food service program. Federal revenue is solely for specified program purposes.

State funding comprises more than 70% of District revenue. This money primarily funds the salaries of teachers, counselors, librarians, principals, educational assistants, and other support staff. It pays for classroom expenses, teaching supplies, materials, textbooks, staff development, curriculum development, and technology support.

Local bonds and levies, when approved by voters, provide for approximately 15% of the District’s budget. Bonds and levies exist because state funding does not cover everything needed for a fast-growing district. Bonds pay for acquisition of property, capital projects, school modernization, and new construction. Levies pay for maintenance, supplemental funding of salaries, textbook/curriculum, and transportation.

In order to fill the remaining gap, several non-profit organizations step in. Donations to the Issaquah Schools Foundation can provide district-wide funding to help ALL students. While state funding provides salaries and other basics for the classroom, tax dollars cannot fund many other programs essential to the District. The Foundation strives to make high-quality education and essential support available to every student in every school.

Organizations associated with each school provide additional funding for enrichment at individual schools. These organizations provide opportunities, unique to each school, when schools cannot use state funding and/or there is not enough funding. The Parent Teacher Student Association (PTA/PTSA) raises funds to provide schools with literacy/art/science enrichment, staff classroom needs and curriculum support, student recognition, staff appreciation, family and community events, and teacher grants. The Associated Student Body (ASB) raises money for optional, non-credit, extracurricular activities, including those that are cultural, athletic, recreational, or social in nature. Booster Club is high school specific and helps all student co-curricular activities including clubs, activities, and sports.

Sincerely,

Ina Ghangurde
Issaquah PTSA Council 2.6 FACE Chair and Vice President of Elementary North

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**STAY CONNECTED**

[Facebook](https://www.facebook.com/issaquahschools/) [Twitter](https://twitter.com/IssaquahSchools) [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/issaquahschools) [LinkedIn](https://www.linkedin.com/company/issaquah-schools/) [Issaquah Schools Foundation](https://issaquahschools.org/) [Issaquah PTSA Council](https://issaquahptsa.org/)

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**LOCAL FUNDING FEBRUARY 2018 LEVY UPDATE**
NEW HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULE INCREASES STUDENTS OPPORTUNITIES

Starting next year, there will be some changes to the daily schedule for students at Issaquah High and Skyline High. Those changes will give students more opportunities to explore new interests, accelerate learning in a passion area, and get help when they need it.

Why the change?
The state recently changed the requirements for high school graduation, increasing the required number of credits and specifying more required classes. This meant that, with the six-period schedule currently in place, there was little room left in the regular school day for students to take classes outside the core requirements. Schools have offered an optional seventh period after the school day, but that wasn’t an option for all students.

The passage of the 2018 levy allowed the district to address this problem. Superintendent Ron Thiele put together a committee made up of administrators, teachers, counselors, and parents in June 2018 to explore options for a new schedule that would allow students to meet the new state graduation requirements and provide more room for classes beyond these requirements.

The committee met five times over the following months and explored a range of possible schedule types. They sought student, teacher, and community feedback throughout the process and held two community input meetings in October. In November, they reached a conclusion, which Superintendent Ron Thiele and the School Board approved.

Beginning next fall, Issaquah High School and Skyline High School will move from their current six-period schedule to a seven-period schedule at the start of the 2022 school year.

What will the changes mean for students?

More opportunities
“For many years, we’ve had students who they’ve have more chances to retake it. If a student loves science, they’ll be able to take more advanced science classes. If a student wants to try out a new class in a new subject, they’ll have more room in their schedule to do so,” said Martinez. She has built relationships with her colleagues to guide students toward schedules that balance rigorous, challenging coursework with the freedom to explore new subjects and allow time to participate in extracurricular activities.

“Being a high school student is about having the opportunity to develop the skills you’re already good at, but it’s also about finding yourself and discovering new talents,” Alicia Mitchell, Assistant Principal at Skyline High School said.

More equitable
Some students put in extra time before or after school or during the summer to meet graduation requirements, get extra help, or pursue extra academic interests. But that’s not an option for every student. Some rely on bus transportation making it difficult to come early or stay late. Some must get home to care for younger siblings or get to an after-school job. Some participate in athletics or other activities after school.

More room in the schedule means those students will have more chances to explore and meet their goals during the school day.

More individualized support
The flex time built into the schedule will allow students to devote extra time to specific subjects and projects and get extra support.

“It’s a built-in time during the day that can support learning outside the traditional class schedule,” said Mitchell. Leadership teams at each school are working with staff to determine how to use flex time to best fit their school’s needs. Some examples of how flex time could be used:

- A math teacher holds a review session with a group of students who struggled with a challenging concept during class.
- A student pursuing an IB diploma meets with her advisor to get feedback on an essay.
- A school-wide assembly.
- A student meets with a counselor to discuss their career plans.

“I’m really excited about it,” Mitchell said. “It will be good for kids.”

Learn more about the work of the high school scheduling committee and the new schedule at bit.ly/ISDHSchedule.

MORE COUNSELORS MEANS MORE SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS — ESPECIALLY THOSE MOST IN NEED

In 2018, more than 30,000 educators, parents, and others across Washington took a survey about what areas they thought schools should most invest in. They ranked one priority above all others: Student support services, including counseling, advising, and mental health.

ISD leaders share the belief that counseling is crucial to the well being and success of students. Supported by the 2018 Educational Programs and Operations Levy, the District added counseling positions at every level this school year, including counselors specifically trained and certified to help students dealing with mental health issues.

What are the counseling roles in Issaquah School District?

School Guidance Counselors: Provide guidance and support for students with academic, social and emotional needs, college and career planning, and more. School counselors are available to all students.

This year, the District added eight new full-time school counselor positions at secondary schools and converted 15 part-time positions at elementary schools into full-time positions. The District now has 47 full-time school counselors and the ratio of full-time counselors to students has improved at every level.

School Based Health Counselors (SBHC): Counselors trained to serve students with mental health concerns such as grief, stress, depression, anxiety, and many others.

This year, the District added seven new full-time Mental Health Counselor positions. All students in the District, K-12, now have access to one of these counselors.

ISD contracts with Swedish Medical Center and Friends of Youth to provide these counselors. These agencies and other school-based health counselors can access resources provided by Swedish and Friends of Youth, including psychiatrists, pediatricians, neurologists, drug and alcohol resources, and homeless services.

They can help families navigate the process of getting care outside of school.

What school staff say about their Mental Health Counselors:

“Mental Health Counselors: “It feels good to know that our students who struggle with mental health issues or trauma get help right here. This is a need that we have had for years. We are so grateful to have her; she is wonderful, the perfect fit for our building!”

- Kiri Marsa, School Counselor, Pine Lake Middle School

“Our SBHC meets with students on a regular basis. She brings her mental health expertise not only to the students she meets with one-on-one, but also to many of our families and staff members. Our office team often seeks out her advice and consultation on situations involving student mental health, an ever-growing need within our community.”

- Mykela Fontane, School Counselor, Challenge Elementary

ISD School Safety Information Nights

Student safety is our top priority and we want families and community members to feel confident that our schools are secure. Join the Issaquah School District Safety Team at one of three Safety Information Nights to learn about what we do to keep students and staff safe every day.

Tuesday, April 23
6:00pm-8:00pm
Pine Lake Middle School

Thursday, April 25
6:00pm-8:00pm
Issaquah Middle School

Tuesday, April 30
6:00pm-8:00pm
Maywood Middle School

District and school leaders, including the District’s Director of Safety and Security, will talk about:

- Emergency preparedness
- Campus safety upgrades
- Levy and bond funded safety measures
- Mental health and counseling
- Safety Advisory Committee
- Lockdowns, drills, and much more

Check out the Issaquah School District Safety webpage for more information on current safety practices, including a printable safety guide, by scanning the QR code or visiting bit.ly/ISDSafety.

"She does a fantastic job of supporting students who don’t have insurance for a mental health counselor or have other barriers to setting up counseling outside the school day."

- Laurel Shane, School Counselor, Liberty High School

What school administrators are saying about their School Guidance Counselors:

“Our counselor shows up with a smile on her face every day, and she always sees the best in kids. For kids who are struggling, counselors provide that extra layer of safety and comfort to make sure students are getting the support they need.”

- Amanda Dorey, Principal, Sunset Elementary

“They have a really broad role. They support all of our students, but they’re most engaged with students who have the most need. They’re just generally pretty awesome.”

- Michelle Caponigro, Principal, Pine Lake Middle School

“They need a huge variety of skills, from mastery of the technical side of graduation requirements and class schedules, to understanding human development and the emotional issues kids face. We ask our counselors to bring their whole selves to this job and they do that.”

- Will Paanannen, Assistant Principal, Skyline High School