

August 29, 2011



Dear Seattle Delegation:

As we head into a new school year, I am very excited to tell you about the extraordinary work happening at Seattle Public Schools. Our students are seeing success, as measured by state tests and by the Measures of Academic Progress (MAP) assessment. We just finished four days of our annual leadership institute where principals, assistant principals and central office leaders come together to renew our focus after summer break. And I am thrilled to be opening two more elementary schools to accommodate our growing enrollment.

As you know, we begin this new school year with limited resources and an uncertain budget forecast. We are focusing our energy this year on getting better at our core work, rather than taking on new work. Our priorities this year are Four Pillars of Success: great principals, great teachers, families connected to schools and a central office that serves schools.

While these Four Pillars serve as our framework for this year, we have also adopted a motto to remind ourselves of what we must achieve: AGREE: Attacking Gaps/Raising Expectations Everywhere. It is time for us to not simply close, but to attack our gaps, and we must do this in partnership with our families. At the same time, we must also raise the quality of instruction for all students, so those needing additional challenge receive that as well.

I know many of you have toured the schools in your districts, and I encourage you to become a member of a school community—get to know the students and teachers, and learn about the amazing work happening at Seattle Public Schools.

For the first time ever, due to cuts to K-12 education, most Seattle Public Schools employees will be taking furlough days. That means our teachers and principals will have one less day to get ready for school, and later in the year, our students will lose a half day of school. I appreciate the willingness of our labor partners, specifically the Seattle Education Association (SEA) and the Principals' Association of Seattle Schools (PASS), to come to the table and negotiate these furlough days, rather than forcing us to absorb an additional \$4 million in cuts as a result of the Legislature's decision.

We work as hard as we can to keep cuts away from students and the classrooms, but we are at a point now where that may be unavoidable. The prospect of mid-year cuts, in addition to further cuts to next year's budget, are forcing us to consider options we would want to avoid.

This fall I have asked a team to come together to brainstorm the options we have to absorb additional cuts while holding the schools as harmless as possible. We will share our work with you, and hope that you will think of us as a partner and a sounding board as you enter the upcoming legislative session. Please feel free to contact me anytime, along with Holly Ferguson or Clifford Traisman, to discuss K-12 educational issues.

As always, thank you for keeping our students foremost in your minds as you do your work. I appreciate all you do on behalf of our students in Seattle.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "S. Enfield".

Susan

*Susan Enfield, Ed.D.
Interim Superintendent
Seattle Public Schools*

cc: Seattle School Board
Clifford Traisman
Glenn Bafia, Seattle Education Association
Olga Addae, Seattle Education Association
Heather Swanson, Principals' Association of Seattle Schools
BiHoa Caldwell, Principals' Association of Seattle Schools