

# FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS



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# FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS

## EARLY LEARNING PROGRAMS TAILORED TO HELP STUDENTS START STRONG

What happens during the first few years of a child's life can start them on a path toward success in school and beyond. That's why the Issaquah School District is committed to providing and expanding excellent preschool and kindergarten programs for our youngest learners, regardless of their families' race, background, or income level.

Our early childhood programs do more than just teach letters, numbers, and shapes. We focus on providing what children need at each stage of their development. Preschool and kindergarten is the time to develop motor skills and critical thinking, and to learn to collaborate with others.

Our teachers work together to ensure that kids are ready at the end of the school year to make a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten and to each grade that follows.

The Issaquah School District provides several preschool programs to meet families' needs:

- The Preschool Academy is a tuition-based preschool at two sites - Skyline High School and the District's new Early Learning Center. Tuition is competitively priced with private preschools in the region.

• The Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) is a state-funded preschool program for children from families with low income, or who face other challenges. In addition to the preschool curriculum, kids in ECEAP receive nutritious meals at school.

• The Early Childhood Education Program (ECE) serves children who qualify for special education services. The curriculum is tailored to help each student develop the skills to prepare them for success in school.

• Before kindergarten starts, we identify students who could most benefit from our pre-kindergarten summer school program and invite them to take part.

• When it's time to leave preschool, all students in the District can attend full-day kindergarten at no cost to families. Our kindergarten programs focus on academics, as well as social and emotional development, and helping kids develop a love of learning.

• We recently launched a new Dual Language Program at two of our elementary schools, which starts with students in kindergarten. Students follow the same curriculum as their peers, but they spend half the day learning in English and half in Spanish.



We also believe in partnering with community preschools. We offer free training to staff from private preschools to promote high-quality teaching and to help them prepare their students to make a smooth transition into kindergarten.

*"Our teachers work together to ensure that kids are ready at the end of the school year to make a smooth transition from preschool to kindergarten and to each grade that follows."*

Excellent early education is one of the most important gifts we can give children, and it will benefit them for the rest of their lives. With the support of families and our community, we will continue to improve and expand our early learning opportunities, so that all of our kids can start strong and go far.



## DELIVERING OUR LEVY AND BOND PROMISES

As we embark upon a new school year, I'd like to take a moment to share my excitement and make note of some important milestones we have attained in the Issaquah School District in this past year. Of significant note, changes to the state funding model, along with the passage of our Educational Programs and Operations Levy in February 2018, allowed the District to implement programs in 2019 that the community has been requesting for many years. These include:

- A new Modified 7-Period Day Schedule at Issaquah High and Skyline High School that creates opportunities for acceleration, exploration, and remediation
- A new Elementary Spanish Dual Language Immersion Program at Clark and Issaquah Valley Elementary Schools
- More Academic Guidance Counselors
- More Mental Health Counselors and Behavior Support Coaches
- A Director of Safety and Security and implementing new safety measures in our schools
- A new teacher mentoring and support program to ensure a successful entry into the profession

Looking forward to the 2019-2020 school year, we will remain focused on fully implementing our new programs. However, the levy supporting these programs will expire in 2020, so we will need to ask voters to renew the levy in 2020 to continue funding them.

As our community evolves and changes demographically, we are reshaping our practices to best meet the needs of the students and families we serve. The Issaquah School Board of Directors adopted the District's first Equity Policy that sets a clear

expectation throughout the system to provide all students the opportunity and support needed to meet their highest potential in a safe and welcoming environment.

We are deeply committed to narrowing the achievement/opportunity gap between our students performing at the highest and lowest academically. As we work toward accomplishing our mission, we pledge to question, grow, and evolve in our understanding of diversity and what it means to be culturally competent.

We have made provisions to deliver additional professional development to staff and, for our students and parents, an equitable behavior expectations section has been added to our student handbooks this year to provide clear guidance. We intend to continue collaborating with community partners to address complex issues such as racism with courage and conviction.

Last school year we wrapped up several significant remodel and expansion projects, including Pine Lake Middle School and Cougar Ridge, Endeavour, Sunset, and Discovery Elementary schools. We purchased land at the entrance to Talus off State Route 900 for Middle School #6 and the property near the entrance to Klahanie in Sammamish for Elementary School #16 to fulfill the 2016 school bond project list. With the move of the District's administrative offices to an office tower just off East Lake Sammamish Parkway, the District will keep the old administration building facility on Holly Street for future purposes,

including housing an early learning center. Watch for news of our groundbreaking and ribbon cutting ceremonies in your E-News, on Facebook and the District website.

All of this wonderful progress would not be possible without the support of our community. From our amazing Volunteers for Issaquah Schools Committee, dedicated Parent Teacher Student Association, forward thinking Issaquah Schools Foundation, and every resident, family, student and staff person, we are truly working together to deliver a world class education that prepares all of our students to accept the academic, occupational, personal, and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment.

*Ron Thiele*

Superintendent



Ron Thiele  
Superintendent

## BOND 2016 UPDATE: REBUILDS, REMODELS, AND EXPANSIONS GALORE!

The Issaquah School District's Capital Projects team has been busy since the April 2016 school bond election! In the past 42 months, the ISD has completed major rebuilds of Pine Lake Middle School and Clark Elementary School, as well as expansions at Cougar Ridge, Discovery, Endeavour, and Sunset Elementary schools.

The District also undertook and completed an extensive process to search for and purchase property for two new elementary schools, a new middle school, and a high school. Upcoming construction projects include Elementary #16 near Klahanie in Sammamish. The District, working with its partners at the City of Sammamish, recently made a decision to delay the construction of the school for 9-12 months to allow plenty of time for traffic

mitigation to be thoughtfully planned out. Stay tuned for updates.

It's full steam ahead with the construction of the ISD's sixth middle school, which will be located near the entrance to the Talus community in central Issaquah. The project is scheduled to be complete in September 2021. The 130,000 square foot facility will house 900 students and help alleviate overcrowding at Maywood Middle School and Issaquah Middle School.

Simultaneously, Maple Hills Elementary and Beaver Lake Middle School are the next school projects, with Beaver Lake estimated to be completed by September of 2020, and Maple Hills by summer of 2021.

Thank you to the citizens of our wonderful school district for taking pride in your community schools! We appreciate your support.



Cougar Ridge Elementary exterior construction April 2019



Endeavour Elementary new classroom wing March 2019

## DISCOVERY ELEMENTARY REMODEL RIBBON CUTTING

ISD School Board President, Harlan Gallinger, accompanied by his daughter, cut the ribbon at a special ceremony to celebrate the remodel of Discovery Elementary. Thanks to community support for the 2016 school bond that funded the project, Discovery now has six new classrooms, new special education classrooms, and a much expanded cafeteria and play area, as well as upgraded classroom technology and safety features.



Stay up to date with all the latest information on our Construction Projects website by scanning the QR code.





## ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION — STEP UP FOR KIDS!

Happy Fall! Congratulations to a successful start of the 2019-20 school year! Since 1987, households like yours have been fueling success by making an impact upon the lives of more than **20,500 Issaquah School District students** by volunteering and donating to the Issaquah Schools Foundation. Thanks to our generous community, the Foundation distributed over **\$11,000,000 to student and educational support programs over the past 7 years** benefiting students within **24 schools**. These are programs that would not be possible without support from Issaquah Schools Foundation. The value of these programs cannot be measured.

The funding for these programs is felt district wide, in every school and by every student. Here are a few of the programs that fall under our umbrella of support:

- Afterschool Homework Help
- Robotic Clubs & STEM Support
- Food & Nutrition Aid
- Academic Enrichment
- Cultural Bridges Family Resource
- Artistic Support
- Basic Needs
- Teacher Grants

At the Issaquah Schools Foundation, we know that student success goes beyond academics. It also involves the emotional and social aspect of schooling. That's why the Foundation funds programs that address the unique needs of students from Kindergarten through 12th grade – we support and fund programs that aren't paid for by state or tax dollars.

Students throughout the district depend on us. The need is even greater this year as demand is rising for programs that help struggling students, those who excel, and those in between. **You can make a difference, help us to cover beyond the basics allowing students to grow and thrive!**

Please join with our community in supporting students during the Foundation's 2019-2020 **Step Up for Kids** Fall fundraising campaign. **Step Up for Kids** with a gift that promotes curiosity and learning, giving kids access to programs that help them achieve in the classroom. **YOU** make it possible for students to experience incredible learning opportunities. The ripple effects will be felt through our community for years to come.

Together we can assure that your child and every child succeeds and thrives. Thank you for taking the step towards making a difference! Please visit [www.isfdn.org](http://www.isfdn.org) to learn more!

To every student's success,



Cornell Atwater  
Executive Director



# WHAT'S HAPPENING IN THE ISD? TOP SNAPSHOTS FROM 2018-2019

## VOICE

For 15 years, adult volunteers have connected one-on-one with ISD students as mentors through the VOICE program. During the 2018-19 school year, more than 300 mentors supported 466 students, helping with academic work, emotional and social skills, and providing a caring adult presence.



VOICE began as a program in the Issaquah Schools Foundation, but this year it became part of the district. Do you have an hour a week to spare during the coming school year? Become a VOICE mentor to find out what kind of difference you could make in the life of a child. Contact [voice@issaquah.wednet.edu](mailto:voice@issaquah.wednet.edu) or 425-837-7216 with questions.



## 2019 Kindergarten Bus Ride-Along

The first step onto a school bus can feel like a giant leap when you're five years old and it's your first day of kindergarten. That's why we have our annual Kindergarten Ride Along, where new kindergarteners can get familiar with the bus alongside their parents so they'll be ready and excited to climb aboard when school starts. More than 100 students participated each day in the event this year, which took place August 6-8.

## PCMS Students Give their School a Parting Gift

Anna Jensen and Aria Shaffer gave a parting gift to Pacific Cascade Middle School as they moved on to high school. They created this painting of education activist and Nobel laureate Malala Yousafzai and presented it to PCMS Principal Jeff McGowan at their eighth grade promotion event in June. Malala is known globally for her work in support of human rights, especially girls' right to education. The painting will hang in the PCMS commons area, near a similar painting of Martin Luther King, Jr.



## Maywood Rubik's Cube Team Ranked 1st in the Nation for Grades 6-8

The Maywood Middle School Rubik's Cube Team solved 25 3-by-3 Rubik's Cubes in 94 seconds at 2018-19 Washington State Rubik's Cube Competition. The team ranked first in Washington and first nationally among grades 6-8.

## Career and Technical Education (CTE) Showcase

Career and Technical Education students from across the District were honored for their hard work at the annual CTE Showcase. Teachers selected 35 outstanding CTE students to showcase their work in a range of fields, including culinary arts, computer science, marketing, American Sign Language, criminology, graphic design, and many more.



## LHS Choirs at Carnegie Hall

The choirs from Liberty High School performed at one of the world's best-known and most-respected theaters: Carnegie Hall. The students were invited to perform by Geoffrey Boers, a nationally recognized conductor.

Want to see more of what's happening right now in the Issaquah School District?

Visit our Snapshots webpage by visiting [www.issaquah.wednet.edu/news/snapshots](http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/news/snapshots), by clicking the featured picture on our homepage, or by scanning the QR code!



## FEBRUARY 2020 RENEWAL / REPLACEMENT LEVY – LOCAL SUPPORT FOR OUR KIDS!



Levies are the only locally approved ballot measures that directly pay for classroom and educational needs in our schools that the state can't meet.

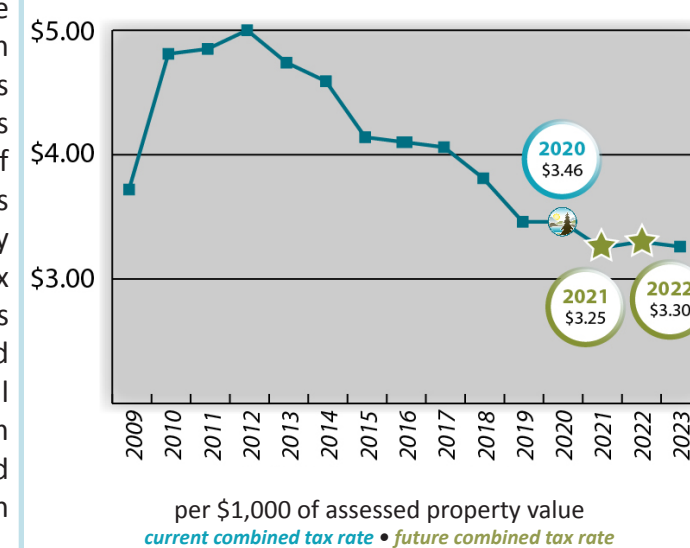
This February 11, 2020, voters will have a chance to continue supporting the great programs and services funded by the previous levy, which is set to expire in 2020.

In 2018, Issaquah School District voters approved a two year Educational Programs and Operations (EP&O) Levy. This levy funded new programs, including the District's first dual language program and an expanded high school schedule! It also provided continued support for career and technical education, mental health counselors, professional development for teachers, safety,

and security staff. With voter approval of the 2020 EP&O Levy, voters can ensure these programs continue benefiting our students for another two years.

The District is asking voters to authorize funding in the amount of \$49.85 Million in 2021 and \$54 Million in 2022. This is about 6.7 Million less than the District is legally authorized to collect. This amount of funding will allow the District to maintain its current programs while remaining fiscally responsible and sensitive to the overall tax rate. Because the District is retiring previous bond debt and has conservatively planned for replacement measures, the total local school tax rate is estimated go down from \$3.46 to \$3.25 per \$1,000 of assessed property value in the first year and \$3.30 in the second.

## ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT ESTIMATED TOTAL LOCAL SCHOOL TAX RATES



## EARTHQUAKE PREPAREDNESS: HOW WE PLAN AND PREPARE IN THE ISD

With the earthquakes we have recently experienced in the Pacific Northwest, you may be wondering how the ISD prepares and plans for seismic events. Safety is always our top priority and we approach emergency preparedness in a comprehensive way.

It starts with our buildings. The Issaquah School District meets or exceeds the current seismic design and building standards for the geographic conditions of the Pacific Northwest as required by code at the time of construction. We also equip our buildings with emergency supplies including water, food, and communication radios.

Next, we plan our emergency response at the district level and practice it with tabletop drills and walk-throughs. Our District Safety Advisory Committee includes local fire and police officials who help us plan and coordinate for emergency situations.

At the school level, all students and staff are trained and perform practice drills for all types

of emergencies, including fires, school lockdowns, and earthquakes. This year, all ISD schools will be participating in Washington State's "Great Shake Out" drill in October and will practice "drop, cover, and hold on."

It is also important for families to prepare at home. We encourage everybody to visit [shakeout.org/washington](http://shakeout.org/washington) for information on how to put together your own emergency supply kit and create a household emergency plan.

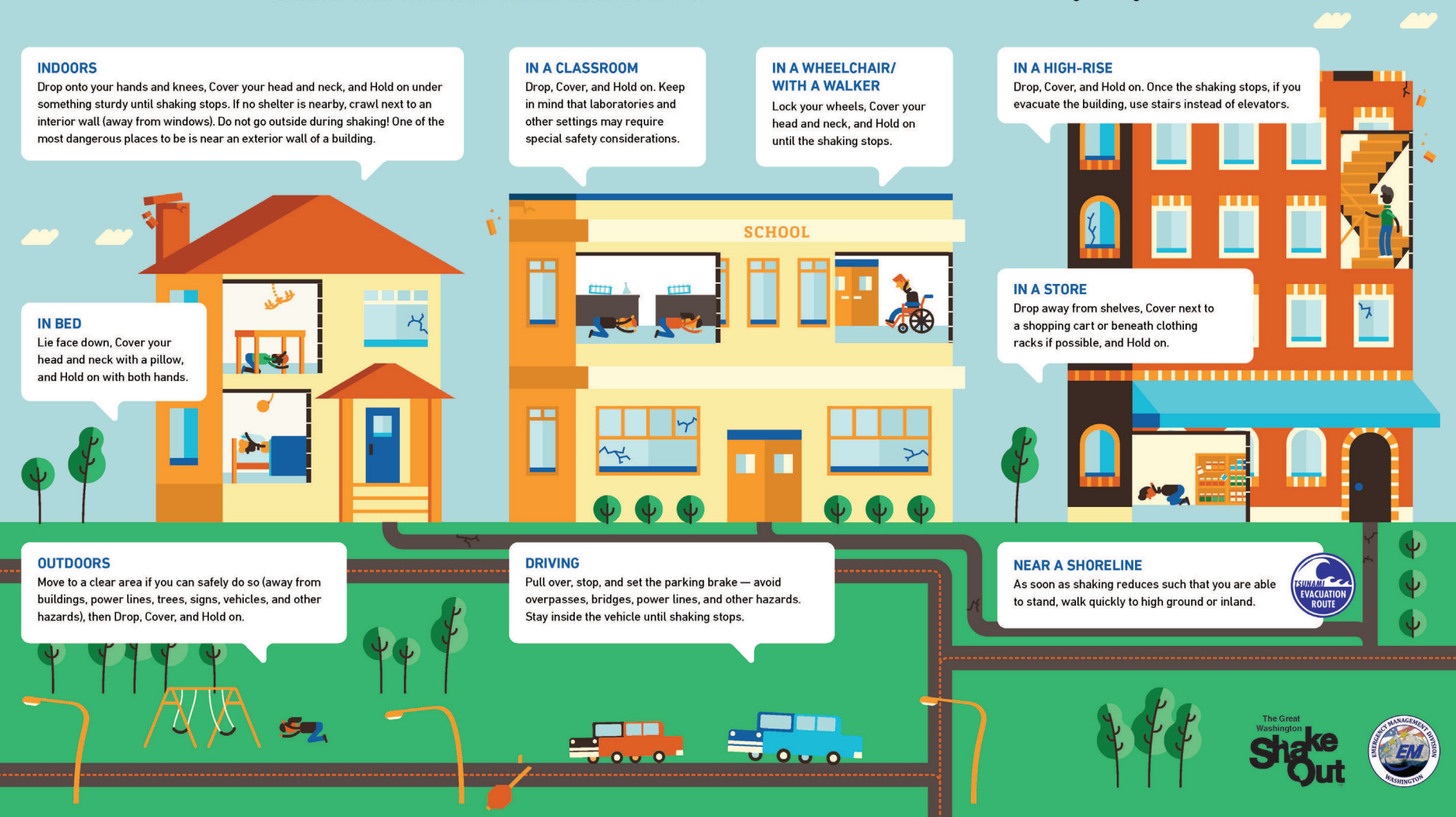
We know that talking about earthquakes can be scary, especially for children. Below are a few tips for talking to kids about earthquakes.

- Keep discussions factual and age-appropriate. If your child asks about earthquakes, it's fine to tell them that earthquakes are normal, natural occurrences and that big ones are very rare.
- Let them know that you've already done important things to prepare like bolting bookshelves to the wall so they won't fall down.

- Explain that while things could be disrupted for a while (like school being temporarily closed), the really important things won't change. You'll be together, and eventually, things will go back to normal.
- Don't wait for the worst to happen before you talk about preparedness. Kids aren't so different from us in handling "what ifs." They want to know they'll be OK, no matter what.
- Keep your tone calm, matter-of-fact and look for teachable moments. If you're stocking up on batteries for example, you can say something like, "Remember that time when the lights went out last winter? If that ever happens again, these batteries will keep our flashlights working and we can pretend we're camping out."
- Letting kids add something to your emergency kit can help them feel more in control – even if it's as simple as choosing the kind of snacks you keep.

## When an Earthquake Strikes:

Where Will You Be? What Will You Do?



Drop, Cover, and Hold on. Washington is earthquake country. It's not a question of "if" but "when" an earthquake will strike us. Be sure to practice your earthquake skills on the third Thursday of each October during the Great Washington ShakeOut. More information at [shakeout.org/Washington](http://shakeout.org/Washington).

- INDOORS**  
Drop onto your hands and knees. Cover your head and neck, and hold on under something sturdy until shaking stops. If no shelter is nearby, crawl next to an interior wall (away from windows). Do not go outside during shaking! One of the most dangerous places to be is near an exterior wall of a building.
- IN A CLASSROOM**  
Drop, Cover, and Hold on. Keep in mind that laboratories and other settings may require special safety considerations.
- IN A WHEELCHAIR/ WITH A WALKER**  
Lock your wheels, Cover your head and neck, and Hold on until the shaking stops.
- IN A HIGH-RISE**  
Drop, Cover, and Hold on. Once the shaking stops, if you evacuate the building, use stairs instead of elevators.
- IN A STORE**  
Drop away from shelves. Cover next to a shopping cart or beneath clothing racks if possible, and Hold on.
- IN BED**  
Lie face down. Cover your head and neck with a pillow, and Hold on with both hands.
- OUTDOORS**  
Move to a clear area if you can safely do so (away from buildings, power lines, trees, signs, vehicles, and other hazards), then Drop, Cover, and Hold on.
- DRIVING**  
Pull over, stop, and set the parking brake – avoid overpasses, bridges, power lines, and other hazards. Stay inside the vehicle until shaking stops.
- NEAR A SHORELINE**  
As soon as shaking reduces such that you are able to stand, walk quickly to high ground or inland.

The Great Washington Shake Out

graphic courtesy of [shakeout.org/washington/resources](http://shakeout.org/washington/resources). Visit the website for additional graphics and tips, including easy to fill out emergency information forms.