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FOCUS ON ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS

ISSAQUAH EDUCATION ASSOCIATION AND ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT AGREE TO HISTORIC FOUR YEAR CONTRACT

Funding for public education is a national issue. In Washington State, we are living in a time of uncertainty, as well as differing opinions, about the new state funding model for education and the impact it has had on local contract negotiations across the state. What we do know for certain is that the demands and expectations of our teachers are greater than ever. Their role in preparing students to accept the academic, occupational, personal, and practical challenges of life in a dynamic global environment—the very mission of our District—cannot be understated.

don't feel underpaid."

However, Gary cautions, a young teacher coming into the ISD today with a Bachelor's Degree and one or two years of experience is still going to have difficulty finding affordable housing near their work and will likely face

The Issaquah School District benefited from the new state education funding model, for which we thank our local legislators. On August 22, 2018, our Board of Directors ratified a new four year contract with the Issaquah Educators Association (IEA), providing an average 15% salary increase to our certificated staff. This salary increase allows the Issaquah School District to remain competitive with the salaries of neighboring districts and offers our teaching professionals some relief from the pressures of the high cost of living in our region.

While the District views this as a historic moment, who better to describe the impact of the new contract than a teacher? FOCUS sat down with Gary Arthur, a 25 year teaching veteran who is also the current Issaquah Education Association President, to learn his perspective on how this agreement impacts our learning community.

Gary notes that one of the ways that society shows honor and respect is through compensation. Teachers have often experienced a disparity as they watch friends they went to college with surpassing them in terms of things like buying nice houses, sending their kids to college, and being able to travel on vacations. "Those of us who chose teaching didn't plan to be rich, but we did plan to be middle class," explains Gary. Throughout the bargaining

process, Gary states that it was appreciated that the District trusted IEA's numbers and understood the membership's concerns. "They met us from that place of mutual respect throughout the bargaining process and as a result, I feel respected, I

Salary compensation is only one element in the contract agreement that benefits teachers and students. According to Gary, other big highlights of the contract center around increased English Language Learning (ELL) teacher support and the

"Experienced teachers may now be in a position to save for retirement or pay down debt, which they were not before."

implementation of full time Positive Behavior and Social Emotional Support (PBSES) coaches. "ELL teachers are amazing specialists," Gary explains. "They are a vital resource to teachers who have English Language Learning students in their classrooms." Gary also says that PBSES coaches being boosted to full time from half time will be a tremendous lift to all teachers as they assist in creating systems that promote a positive environment in their classroom and throughout the school.

Another vital component of the agreement involves Mentorship and professional development. "Having professional learning coaches is a game changer," says Gary. "The Issaquah School District is a high performing and very complex district. When you come to teach here, you're going to learn at least 50 acronyms and three sophisticated computer systems, not to mention adapting to the culture in your building." The District is providing top notch teachers ready to take on the challenge of getting new staff up to speed and experienced continually



Kindergarten students at Sunny Hills Elementary settle in on the first day of class during the 2018-19 school year.

growing to new heights. The District also agreed to increasing counselor time in secondary schools and, for the first time in the history of the District, all elementary schools now have full time counselors. Gary says that these counselors help everyone in the system. "When we have a student presenting with anxiety or depression, it affects everyone because every classroom is like a little community. We need someone available who is trained to support students with mental health issues, so it is an enormous gain for us."

Gary also mentioned that he is pleased that the District was open to creating opportunities to work on issues with regard to Echo Glen, the State Juvenile Rehabilitation Center run by the ISD. Gary explains that the District cannot enrich the program up at Echo Glen using Local Levy dollars, which is frustrating because the population is made up of a very vulnerable set of kids and the staff there has an enormous task. "Just knowing that we can initiate concerns with the District about the complicated, scary jobs that Echo Glen teachers have, had a big impact on us. We know we are putting kids there at first, and, to the extent that we can, improve and change there."

Finally, the new contract, being a four year deal, provides for stability and security, which benefits both the District and the community as a whole. Gary reminds us, "Children in school today will one day be the leaders of our community. They are born here and they have a right to an education, to learn about and understand the nuances of our society. To learn how to heal sick people, how to build things, and how to create." Truly, we all benefit from a student population that is engaged and giving back to the community. As Gary concludes, "I recall the many teachers that supported me, who encouraged me to be in the school band, take up sports, and participate in the student senate. Those experiences were meaningful to me and they show how the influence of teachers extends far beyond academics to promote a society where we listen to and value each other."

ISSAQUAH SCHOOLS FOUNDATION — ALL IN FOR KIDS



*"Honestly, it's completely given me a purpose to get up in the morning."
— Robotics Club Member*

being a member of a team and community. We fund programs such as Shakespeare Alive – a concept initially funded through our teacher grant process and now available to all ninth-grade students – which gives an interactive educational twist to exploring the Shakespearean world.

Donations to the Foundation also support the critical area of basic student needs. Basic student needs include programs such as Feeding Student Success, which helps kids stay focused by providing free snacks, breakfasts and lunches; and Tools for School, which provides free backpacks filled with school supplies to families who need financial support.

The Foundation is also a key force in supporting emerging efforts and emergency needs. The Foundation supports the District's Student Intervention Department by providing funding for professional development for teachers so that they have the tools they need related to social

and emotional support for things like bullying, mental health, and issues for students facing homelessness.

All of the above—and much more—is made possible by the generosity of our community, parents, businesses and local partners who believe enough in our work and step up to help. Please visit our website www.isfdn.org to learn more. Thank you!

With appreciation,

Liz Swanson
Executive Director
Issaquah Schools Foundation

FROM THE ISSAQUAH PTSA COUNCIL

Hopefully, you are settling into your Fall routine and that joining your children's schools' PTAs/PTSAs was something you checked off your list in August. If not, we want you to give PTA/PTSA membership another look and add it to your November to-do list!

Why join PTA? Your membership helps make your school's PTA/PTSA stronger. More voices, lend more pull when Washington State PTA is advocating for children at the state level. We had over 15,000 voices representing Issaquah last year, and that makes an impression.

Did you know that PTA began as an advocacy organization for children?

The National PTA was instrumental in creating things like kindergarten, child labor laws, and school lunch programs. PTAs continue to advocate for children's issues even today. Joining your PTA lends a strong message that our voices count. The Washington State PTA was integral in the creation of preschool (the term was actually coined by the WSPTA!). WSPTA has also been instrumental in programs like Breakfast at the Bell and supporting simple majority for bond bills.

Stronger voices help move problems towards solutions, ideas towards actual programs, and helps our kids be the best they can be.

At your own school, PTA/PTSA membership builds strong community, and helps your PTA provide programs, activities, family events, and grants that cannot be provided by the school district. Your PTA can match your community's values and work to offer things important to you and your school community. PTA/PTSA membership shows your school that you value your children's education and their experience at school.

PTA/PTSA members advocate for children every day. Helping your child communicate with their teacher is advocating. Partnering with the school administration to solve a problem is advocating. Lending your voice to the largest volunteer child advocacy association in the state benefits the children across the Issaquah School District as well as those across the state.

Did you know that any living person may be a member of your PTA? This means, parents, grandparents, cousins, neighbors, community supporters, and anyone else who wants to embrace your children in their education. Help boost your school's PTA/PTSA

membership by asking if those you know want to support your kids at their school, by joining your PTA.

Now, wouldn't you want to be a part of a dynamic group who supports the best interests of children? If you have already joined your child's PTA, we thank you. If not, please find your school's PTA here <http://www.issaquahptsa.org/issaquah-ptsa-council-member-pta-ptsas> and join today.

Thank you!

Leslie Kahler
Issaquah PTSA Council 2.6 President



Advocating and Supporting our Schools & Community 2.6



Gary Arthur, IEA President

PINE LAKE MIDDLE SCHOOL CELEBRATES NEW BUILDING WITH RIBBON CUTTING CEREMONY

What truly makes a school special? At Pine Lake Middle School, it is the people and school traditions that create a special sense of place and belonging. So it is no surprise that the Pine Lake Wolverines' ribbon cutting ceremony honored tradition while celebrating the new. Principal Michelle Caponigro expressed her thanks to the many people involved from the contracts and architects, to the ISD New Construction Team to staff members and the families and community members who made the rebuild possible by approving the 2016 school bond. PLMS Wood Shop Teacher, Roy Cress, gave a heartfelt speech and explained that when Pine Lake has a get together it is traditional to sing a song. He grabbed his guitar and got the whole crowd singing a rendition of *This Land is Your Land*. Maia Knox from the City of Sammamish was

also at the event and expressed the importance of schools and great learning environments within the greater community. Superintendent Ron Thiele took a few moments to express his thanks to voters for supporting the District's bonds and levies as well as all

of the hard work of those involved in the project. The night was capped off with the Issaquah School Board of Directors cutting the ribbon on the stage. After the event, attendees enjoyed dessert treats and toured the new building.



Left to Right: Maia Knox, Communications Manager City of Sammamish, Jason Morse, Executive Director of Middle Schools, Ron Thiele, Superintendent, Michelle Caponigro, Principal of Pine Lake Middle School, and School Board Directors Lisa Callan, Suzanne Weaver (with scissors), President Anne Moore, and Marnie Maraldo.

ISD STUDENTS CONTINUE TO PERFORM WELL ON STATE ASSESSMENTS

Issaquah School District students continue to perform well on State Assessments, scoring well above the state average in all areas tested by the Smarter Balanced Assessments (SBAs).

Data recently released by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) indicates that in English Language Arts, the percentage of Issaquah School District students meeting the new standard ranged from 77.2% in fourth grade to a high of 88.6% in tenth grade. At the State level, the percentage of students meeting the standard in English Language Arts ranged from 55.5% in third grade to a high of 69.5% in tenth grade.

In Math, the percentage of Issaquah School District students meeting the standard ranged from 66.4% in tenth grade to a high of 80.6% in third grade. At the State level, scores ranged from 40.6% meeting standard in tenth grade to 57.5% in third grade.

The Issaquah School District saw the most significant increase in scores in 2018 in third grade English Language Arts and third grade Math. With State test scores, the Issaquah School District acknowledges that it has achievement gaps to address, particularly among special education students.

“I am pleased to see that our students continue to

perform at very high levels,” said Superintendent Ron Thiele. “We recognize that we have achievement gaps, but I am thankful to our local voters and legislators for providing more resources to the ISD. This has allowed us to significantly increase our special education staffing as well as address opportunity gaps in all other areas.”

The drop in tenth grade math scores reflects an unfortunate error in administering the test at Issaquah High School. Some tenth grade students were not offered the Math SBA and their scores were marked as zeros. However, 96% of the tenth grade students who did take the Math SBA at Issaquah did meet standard on the test. More information about this is posted on the [ISD Website](#).

In 2018, students in grades 3-8 and in grade 10 took the Smarter Balanced Assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and Math. Students in grades 5, 8, and 11 took the new Washington Comprehensive Assessment of Science tests. This is a change from previous years. Previously grade 11 was identified as the federal accountability testing grade in high school for ELA and Math. These new online tests are based on Next Generation

Science Standards (NGSS), adopted by Washington State in 2013. Full results for the state and school district scores are available online on the [OSPI website](#).

Issaquah School District SBA Results-Percent of Students Meeting Standard

ELA - % Proficient	2017	2018	Change	Math - % Proficient	2017	2018	Change	WCAS - % Proficient
Grade	2017	2018	Change	2017	2018	Change	2018	
3	73.5%	77.4%	+3.9%	79.5%	80.6%	+1.1%		
4	76.4%	77.2%	+0.8%	76.9%	77.4%	+0.5%		
5	80.7%	80.2%	-0.5%	76.8%	76.5%	-0.3%	78.7%	
6	75.5%	76.5%	+1.0%	73.6%	72.1%	-1.5%		
7	80.8%	80.1%	-0.7%	79.6%	77.4%	-2.2%		
8	79.1%	79.8%	+0.7%	76.9%	77.0%	+0.1%	80.5%	
10	n/a	88.6%	n/a	n/a	66.4%	n/a		
11	91.3%	n/a	n/a	suppressed	n/a	n/a	24.9%	

Washington State

SBA Results-Percent of Students Meeting Standard

ELA - % Proficient	2017	2018	Change	Math - % Proficient	2017	2018	Change	WCAS - % Proficient
Grade	2017	2018	Change	2017	2018	Change	2018	
3	52.6%	55.5%	+2.9%	57.8%	57.5%	-0.3%		
4	55.2%	57.3%	+2.1%	54.3%	53.8%	-0.5%		
5	58.6%	59.2%	+0.6%	48.6%	48.5%	-0.1%	55.2%	
6	55.5%	55.9%	+0.4%	48.2%	48.2%	0.0%		
7	60.1%	59.6%	+0.5%	49.9%	49.0%	-0.9%		
8	58.5%	58.9%	+0.4%	47.6%	47.5%	-0.1%	52.9%	
10	n/a	69.5%	n/a	n/a	40.6%	n/a		
11	73.6%	n/a	n/a	25.9%	n/a	n/a	30.3%	

ISSAQUAH SCHOOL BOARD ADOPTS NEW DISTRICT EQUITY POLICY

Last June, the Issaquah School Board adopted a new District Equity Policy called Executive Limitation-16 or EL-16.

The new policy was the culmination of a thorough, yearlong process that involved many discussions during school board meetings and several rounds of drafting policy language. Community feedback was sought throughout the process and the board took input given in person at board meetings and through numerous emails. To ensure that all stakeholders had an opportunity to review the policy and provide input, the Board also interviewed students

and held two community meetings. Both meetings were well attended by a diverse group of participants who worked with the Board and ISD administrators on the refining and clarifying the policy language.

As Board President, Anne Moore stated, “The foundation of the equity policy is our belief that each student has the potential to achieve, and our goal is to remove barriers to that achievement. We believe in an environment and culture that respects the diversity in our community.”

With the official adoption of the policy, Superintendent

Ron Thiele and ISD administrators are now in the process of developing an “interpretation” of the policy to present to the board for approval. The interpretation will include specifics regarding how the District will implement and monitor adherence to the policy.

Please visit the District’s Equity Page at <http://www.issaquah.wednet.edu/district/equity> for more information, including a video by the school board explaining what equity means to them and why this work is so important for the success of all students in the Issaquah School District.

NEW HIGH SCHOOL SCHEDULING COMMITTEE PROGRESS

In February of 2018, voters approved the Issaquah School District’s Programs and Operations Levy, paving the way for the District to pursue expanded opportunities for high school students within a new high school schedule.

In June 2018, a committee was chartered to develop and recommend a common schedule for all comprehensive high schools that provides students with opportunities for enrichment, exploration, acceleration, and remediation. The committee surveyed students, families and staff and held two in-person community input sessions in October. They are nearing a final recommendation to be delivered to the Superintendent by Wednesday, November 21. If you are interested in learning more, please visit the ISD home page at www.issaquah.wednet.edu and look under Hot Topics or search for High School Scheduling Committee in the search bar. You will be directed to agendas, minutes, and additional information regarding this exciting and important development in the ISD.



ISSAQUAH SCHOOL DISTRICT WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR OF SAFETY, DAVE MONTALVO!

School Safety is a top concern for the Issaquah School District as well as our families. While statistics are very clear that schools are among the safest places for a child to be, when the news brings us stories of tragedies happening in schools around the nation, it makes sense that people are concerned. Thanks to the support of local voters who have supported the District’s Programs and Operations Levies, the ISD has invested in numerous safety upgrades the past several years, including upgrades to security cameras, entry systems, and access controls.

The District also employs school security officers at our high schools and contracts with local law enforcement agencies to provide school resource officers or “SROs” to serve our schools. This year,

the District has created a new position to help manage and oversee all aspects of school safety from planning and training to incident response.

Meet Dave Montalvo, Issaquah School District’s new Director of Safety and Security! Dave has more than 30 years of experience with the King County Sheriff’s Office. For our families who live in the Liberty High School feeder pattern, Dave is a familiar face having spent the past 13 years as an SRO for our south end schools as well as those in unincorporated King County and Newcastle Elementary.

“It’s amazing,” says Dave. “When I became the SRO at Liberty High School, it was to be a two year commitment. I had no idea I would be there for another 11 years, but it was a wonderful experience!” However, the SRO experience wasn’t his first in schools. Dave was one of the original DARE instructors in our region. DARE is a program that originated out of the Los Angeles Police Department and was just beginning in the Seattle area when Dave was tapped to teach classes. Dave discovered that students were receptive to police officers coming into their schools. “They were surprised that we were there taking an interest in their health,” recalls Dave. “They appreciated that we were taking time out of our schedule to spend time with them in their classes and help them make right decisions.”

Since stepping into his new role as Director of Safety and Security, Dave has taken on a number of duties, including running the District’s Safety Advisory Committee, assisting with Earthquake, Fire, and Lockdown Drills as well as Run-Hide-Fight trainings across the District. He also serves as a liaison between

the District and law enforcement and first responders in emergency situations. Dave says he is impressed with the amount of time and resources the District puts into safety and security and sees the ISD as a leader in this area. There are always places to improve though, and Dave, as the Vice President for the Washington State Security Officers Association, says he will bring best practice training for SROs to our District.

Dave says that what most impresses him about the Issaquah School District is how we all support each other from parents, to citizens, and community service clubs and organizations like the PTSA and Issaquah Schools Foundation. “It is unbelievable,” says Dave. “You see people helping out with school supplies, scholarships, and offering opportunities to kids. Unless you are in a school, you don’t really know how much is happening. People don’t realize how much our staff does for all kids, from those in crisis to AP Scholars, to children with special needs. It has touched me a lot. I’ve had the great opportunity to work with amazing teachers and administrators to ensure our kids learn, grow, and succeed in a safe environment. It’s not just words, I really mean it. It’s an honor to be part of the team. I wouldn’t do it in any other district – I am doing this for Issaquah because of our amazing learning community.”

When asked what advice he has for families who are concerned about school safety, Dave says “It is unfortunate that our children have to live in a world of violence, but families can rest assured that we as a District team—from the School Security and School Resource Officers to the teachers and administrators at both the building district levels—have protocols in place to ensure their kids are safe. It’s a big team effort.”



Dave Montalvo, ISD Director of Safety and Security

COUGAR RIDGE ELEMENTARY COMPLETES 2016 BOND EXPANSION PROJECT

Cougar Ridge Elementary celebrated the completion of its expansion project with a ribbon cutting ceremony on September 4, 2018. Staff, students, parents, and members of the ISD School Board gathered to celebrate the expansion project, which has improved safety and security at the building while increasing capacity to accommodate a growing school population. The relocation of the front office and Special Services space, along with a new entry system, provides improved security

in the building. The expansion included adding six classrooms to accommodate State-funded All Day Kindergarten as well as increased activity space and a larger Commons. Additionally, new play equipment has replaced old equipment and the area and equipment have been expanded using PTSA funds. The Cougar Ridge expansion is one of the projects approved by voters in the 2016 school bond initiative. For more information, please visit our [construction projects page on our website!](#)



Issaquah School District Staff and School Board Members, along with Cougar Ridge Principal Drew Terry and students, celebrate the completion of Cougar Ridge Elementary expansion project.

DUAL LANGUAGE PROGRAM COMING TO CLARK AND ISSAQUAH VALLEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOLS

After two years of development and preparation, the Issaquah School District will open its first Dual Language Program/Spanish Immersion in the fall of 2019. The program will be hosted at Clark and Issaquah Valley Elementary Schools beginning at the kindergarten level.

The Dual Language Program provides content-based instruction to students in two languages. This allows students, over a number of years of participation in the program, to become proficient and literate in both languages, achieve high academic standards across subject areas, and develop cross-cultural understanding and skills.

“We are excited to bring this opportunity to our students,” said Assistant Superintendent of Elementary Education, Jodi Bongard. “The optimal window of learning a second language is during a student’s primary years, so Kindergarten is the perfect place to begin building those skills.”



Providing this program is made possible because of strong community support and the approval of the 2018 levy. More information will be coming this year about the Dual Language Program and the enrollment procedure.

A MESSAGE FROM THE SUPERINTENDENT

For decades the Issaquah School District has been among the top performing districts academically in Washington State. Much has changed in the Issaquah School District, our nation, and our world since I began working in the District as principal at Issaquah Middle School in 2001. Back then, the ISD was a semi-rural suburban district of 13,000 students and 19 schools. Today we run 24 schools with nearly 21,000 students, operate the education program at Echo Glen juvenile detention center, and will build four new schools in the next five years to try to keep pace with the growth in our region.

While growth is the most obvious, there are many other changes. Microsoft, Amazon, and other technology companies have been bringing in a workforce from all over the world. The students and families in our District today reflect that diversity. Technology and social media have changed every facet of our lives, including the way we work, communicate, and educate. Our task as educators is to prepare students for jobs and careers in fields that do not even exist yet. Therefore, like all organizations, the Issaquah School District has had to adjust to changing times. I am proud of the hard work and dedication of our staff in meeting the challenge of change while maintaining high academic performance, continuing to have one of the highest graduation rates in the state, and earning our sixteenth consecutive clean financial audit from the State of Washington.

However, we have more work to do. Our human resources department works tirelessly to recruit high quality teachers in the midst of an extreme national teacher shortage. Further, they are working to recruit teachers and staff from diverse backgrounds to better reflect the diversity of students in our classrooms. We are concerned that when we look at our data, our students of color or with special needs are not performing as well academically as their peers. This, as well as concerns around the disparities in discipline rates we see among students from different races, has prompted our District and school board to address equity issues. Our commitment is to ensure that all students who walk through our doors learn in an environment that supports their growth.

Our District, like many others around the nation,

is experiencing higher incidents of mental health and social-emotional behavior issues among our students. To address student needs, we partner with Swedish Hospital and Friends of Youth to bring mental health counselors into our schools to support our students and school counselors. Our District has also adopted a system wide program called Positive Behavior and Social Emotional Support (PBSES). PBSES includes dedicated student support coaches who also support teachers so they can keep the focus on instruction in the classroom. We have also invested in additional safety and security measures, such as new building entry systems, more security cameras, and updated emergency protocols and plans.

All of these initiatives are backed by local levy dollars and we thank voters for approving our recent Programs and Operations, School Bus, and Capital Improvements and Technology Levies. In order for our students to succeed and collaborate globally, we need to look beyond academics solely and support the whole child. Our partners in the PTSA and Issaquah Schools Foundation invest time and monetary resources to support a wide range of programs that enrich students’ lives beyond what the state provides for basic education. The Issaquah School District has benefited from the increased funding from the new state funding model, and we do thank our legislators for their efforts in meeting their paramount duty to apply full public education. Their work amounts to one of the greatest changes in the way public education has been funded in the state’s history. As with anything new of this scale, we know our legislators will be hard at work addressing crucial elements of the new funding model to ensure it works for all districts in every community across the state.

No matter what the future brings, we remain committed to our mission and to accomplishing it in a fiscally responsible manner, for it is an honor and a privilege to serve our community and the students who come through our doors each school day.

Ron Thiele

Superintendent