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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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Letter from Highline Public Schools Board of Directors Re: Seattle-Tacoma International Airport Expansion

As members of the Highline Public Schools Board of Directors, we are entrusted by our community to advocate for our students and protect the education they deserve. That responsibility is especially urgent as plans for Seattle-Tacoma International Airport expansion move forward.

Our students already carry an unequal share of the airport's impacts. Expanding the airport without stronger protections and greater investment will only deepen that burden. Growth is not sustainable when it asks children and families to absorb more while their health and well-being go unprotected.

In Highline, these impacts are already felt in our schools. Our schools are where children learn, families connect, and communities build belonging. Across South King County and in Highline, families already face some of the greatest gaps in health and life expectancy, and those burdens fall hardest on communities of color and lower-income families. Children are among the most vulnerable to the environmental conditions that shape those outcomes.

Our students need classrooms where they can hear their teachers, breathe clean air, and learn without constant disruption. Noise, traffic, construction, and air pollution may seem like separate issues, but together they shape the conditions that define daily life for students and families in Highline.

Highline is the only school district with schools in the area identified in the airport's environmental review as potentially affected by the expansion. Our students already learn under aircraft flight paths, and not all our schools have the sound protections they need. The Port has invested in sound insulation at some Highline schools, but others still need that protection. The impacts are not hypothetical. Expanding the airport without addressing them first would only add to the burden Highline schools are already carrying.

Every student known by name, strength and need

Investment in the airport should be matched by investment in the schools, cities, and communities that carry its impacts. Before expansion proceeds, decision-makers must fulfill outstanding commitments and establish clear, enforceable protections for the future.

This means completing sound insulation at all affected Highline schools, investing in ventilation and air filtration for healthy classrooms, and monitoring air quality at schools and in surrounding neighborhoods. It also means reducing traffic impacts on students and families, and ensuring impacted communities have real decision-making power so they can shape their own future, not simply respond to decisions made for them.

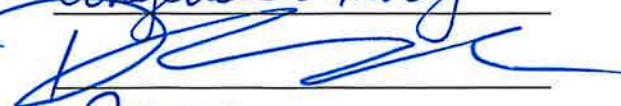
Commitments already made by the Port must be fully delivered and regularly evaluated, and that accountability must reach beyond school walls. The cities, neighborhoods, and families living closest to the airport deserve sustained investment too. Regional growth should bring regional benefits. It should not shift a greater share of the costs onto the communities already bearing them.

Our students are the future of this region. Their health, safety, and education should not be the price of regional growth. If the airport grows, the investment in the people living with its impacts must grow with it.

The Highline Public Schools Board of Directors listed below approved submitting this letter to the Port of Seattle at the Regular School Board Meeting on August 19, 2026.










Stephanie Tidholm (Aug 19, 2026 19:17:20 PDT)

Highline Public Schools Board of Directors