Schools Are the Centerpiece of University Place

A Message from School Board President Mary Lu Dickinson

It is an honor to be the new president of the University Place School District Board of Directors. This is a place I have always called home. During my years at Sunset Elementary, and all through my years in school leading up to graduation from Curtis Senior High, I received an outstanding education. I continue to benefit from these experiences as an adult and as a parent. My husband and I will watch our fifth UPSD graduate cross the stage this coming June. Each one of our children has been well-served by our excellent public school system.

Continued on page 2
Thank you, UPSD Board Members

January is School Board Recognition Month. University Place staff and students appreciate the commitment and service of each of our board members.

Pictured at a recent board meeting above, from left, are new board member Marisa Peloquin, T’wina Franklin, Annie Fitzsimmons, Board President Mary Lu Dickinson, Vice President Ethelda Burke, and Superintendent Jeff Chamberlin.
Big changes are taking place in the way schools are funded in Washington and more changes may be on the way. For now, the state has decided to collect more money from citizens to pay for schools. Because the state will collect more, local school districts like UPSD will collect much less. However, local financial support of schools is still needed. Here’s why:

**High Quality Programs**
Some of the programs that levies fund are optional programs that our community wants and expects. In UP, our strong athletics, music, and performing arts programs are examples. Lower class sizes are another example—the levy pays for additional teachers to reduce the number of students in each classroom. Levies also help pay school security personnel, counselors, nurses, and librarians.

**Underfunded and Unfunded Requirements**
State and federal laws require many things from school districts without providing funds to cover actual costs. Special education is an example of an underfunded program. Laws guarantee services for students, but funding is insufficient. Local funds subsidize these programs. Transportation for homeless students is an example of an unfunded program. Federal law protects homeless students from changing schools when they move, but provides no funding for the required transportation. Our local levy closes the gap between what is provided and what is needed for these important, mandatory programs.

**Access to Additional State Funding**
The state provides Local Effort Assistance funding for some school districts. UPSD qualifies for these funds, but only if citizens pass a local levy. Local Effort Assistance provides approximately $3 million each year. This state money is lost without a levy.

**Maintenance of Facilities and Technology**
The state provides no funding for capital improvements like roofs and HVAC systems, and only limited funding for technology. Local capital levies are needed to adequately fund both.

The new school funding plan created by the legislature has specific provisions for levies because lawmakers know that local funds are still needed. For now, levy collections are capped at $1.50 per $1,000 of assessed value. This is a dramatic reduction for districts like ours and will provide our citizens with much-needed tax relief; however, the legislature may change the rules for levy collections again in the future.

Please do not hesitate to contact me directly with any questions you might have about school funding and local levies. I can be reached at jchamberlin@upsd83.org or 253-566-5600.
I am grateful for our outstanding schools and for the ongoing support from UP citizens that makes it all possible. University Place residents have established an impressive legacy of support for public schools since the very beginning. Early settlers were focused on education when they named our school district University Place in anticipation of the University of Puget Sound’s arrival here. The college never materialized, but the education-first attitude of our citizens has remained.

Our public schools continue to be the centerpiece of the UP community. Strong schools lead to increased student achievement, decreased crime rate, increased property values, and increased attractiveness to businesses. Our well-maintained facilities, sports programs, music concerts, and other events also provide recreational and cultural opportunities for all—see the calendar of upcoming events on the back cover. Everybody in UP benefits from our collective commitment to education.

Just as the early settlers of University Place were important in establishing education as a community priority, you play an important role today in laying the groundwork that will allow this tradition to continue into the future.

In February, you will have the opportunity to consider the renewal of two ballot measures that will provide funding to maintain our current programs and facilities. Both of these measures replace levies approved by voters in 2014 that will expire in 2018. I urge you to participate in this election and cast your vote by February 13, 2018.

The Board continues to look for ways to improve and is interested in linking with the community to listen to your thoughts. Please contact Board members if there are any school issues you would be interested in hearing more about. We look forward to working with you to develop competent, contributing citizens and to create the best schools possible. We thank you for all of your support.

MAKE YOUR VOICE HEARD and DON’T FORGET TO VOTE!

ONLINE VOTER REGISTRATION
DEADLINE
JANUARY 15

IN-PERSON VOTER
REGISTRATION DEADLINE
FEBRUARY 5

BALLOTS SUBMITTED
FEBRUARY 13

Pierce County Auditor’s office: www.co.pierce.wa.us/328/elections
RECOGNITION FOR UPP AND DRUM

University Place Primary was named a 2017 School of Distinction for continuous improvement over the past five years in both English Language Arts and mathematics.

Drum Intermediate has been named a National Title I, Part A, Distinguished School and will be nationally recognized for exceptional student achievement in 2017. Drum staff will be honored at a national event in February.

MARISA PELOQUIN JOINS UPSD BOARD

Marisa Peloquin knows the value of hard work—as the daughter of parents who never graduated high school, she worked her way to an ROTC college scholarship. She earned a bachelor’s degree and an MBA during her 29-year career in the U.S. Army, where she still serves as a colonel in the reserves. She credits her family’s move to UP with giving her the tools to continue her education, and she returned here to raise her two sons after her active-duty service. Extremely involved in the community and the schools, Peloquin served on the state board of directors for the PTA, started the WatchDOGS program in the district, and promotes education in many other ways.

Her focus on the school board is on preparing students for life after graduation, whether that’s college, trade school, or entering the work force. “Students need an understanding of viable options open to them. Career and Technical Services is the key to that understanding,” said Peloquin, a member of the CTE Advisory Board. “Everyone should leave with a plan.”

Marisa Peloquin is the newest member of the Board of Directors. A graduate of Curtis High School, she is a successful businesswoman and a colonel in the U.S. Army Reserves.
CURTIS CADETS STAND TALL

The Annual Military Inspection (AMI) is a yearly review of the Curtis HS NJROTC program consisting of individual inspections and analysis of the operations of the unit. Every aspect of the program is inspected from the administration and cadet records to supply and uniform issue. Additionally, the cadets are individually inspected for adherence to uniform and grooming standards as well as required program knowledge. The guest inspector then observes the entire cadet corps as they come together for the Pass in Review. The Pass in Review is a military parade ceremony during which the entire corps of cadets performs in place military drill maneuvers, one of the unit’s precision drill teams performs their routine and the highlight of the event is when the entire company passes in front of the dignitaries and the guest inspector for their review. It is quite an impressive sight to see 100 Curtis Vikings executing maneuvers in unison under the direction of the Company Commander.
LOCAL LEVIES

FAQ for Citizens

The UPSD Board of Directors recently approved two resolutions placing renewal of the expiring Educational Programs and Operations Levy and the expiring Safety and Technology Levy on the ballot for February 13, 2018. If approved by voters, these levies will bridge the gap between what the state provides for schools and what UP parents and citizens expect. Both are four-year levies and require a “simple majority” (50% or greater) to pass. We hope these answers to frequently asked questions about our funding and levies will be helpful to our citizens. The following four pages explain in more detail what each levy would be used for if approved.

Are these new taxes on UP residents?

No. Both the Educational Programs and Operations Levy and the Safety, Technology, and Capital Improvements Levy replace existing levies and are not new taxes. Both levies were approved by voters in 2014 and expire in 2018. UP voters have supported the Educational Programs Levy for more than 30 years and the Technology Levy since 1994.

How will property taxes be impacted by these levies?

Taxes will decrease. Because the state is providing more funding to the district, the combined tax rate and tax collections on these levies will go down by approximately $1.60/$1,000 of assessed value. The owner of a median-priced home in UPSD ($370,000) would see a reduction of about $550 annually in local school taxes if both levies pass.

How are public schools funded in University Place?

Where does the money come from?

All public school districts in Washington are funded by a combination of state, local and federal revenue. The State of Washington will provide about 76% of our funding next year. We anticipate that 8% will come from the federal government. Local fees will account for about 3%. Local levies will provide about 13% of our revenue in the coming years. A portion of these “local” funds will be Local Effort Assistance money from the state that is available ONLY if we pass a local Educational Programs levy. These State LEA funds will account for approximately $3,000,000 to University Place schools annually for the duration of the levy.
WHAT DOES IT PAY FOR?
Local levy dollars help support programs that are not funded—or are underfunded—by the state. On these pages are examples of ways in which levy funds are used in all eight of our district’s schools to maintain the high standards our citizens have come to expect in University Place.

More information on both levies is available online at: www.upsd.wednet.edu/Page/6515.

The district’s ATHLETICS programs in grades 8-12

MUSIC and PERFORMING ARTS programs, including orchestra, band, choir, and theater

Additional TEACHERS to lower class size in grades 4-12

TRAINING for teachers and other staff
Additional **SECURITY** personnel to provide for student safety

**CLASSROOM MATERIALS** such as books, textbooks, supplies, equipment, and technology

**COMMUNITY USE** of the swimming pool, athletic fields, and other facilities

Programs to provide more **LEARNING OPTIONS** for kids with different needs and interests

**COUNSELORS** and **NURSES** to assist students with health, safety, wellness, and post-graduation options

**TRANSPORTATION** and **SPECIAL EDUCATION** costs not covered by the state

After-school **PROGRAMS**, extracurricular **ACTIVITIES**, and summer school

**LOCAL LEVY COLLECTIONS WILL DECREASE**

$13,000,000
2017

$8,000,000
2019 (est.)

Actual (2017) and estimated (2019) yearly local levy collections of combined Propositions 1 and 2, Educational Programs and Capital Improvement levies.
Proposition 2
Safety, Technology, and Capital Improvements Levy

How is Proposition 2 Different from Proposition 1?

This levy is smaller and pays for very specific items. The Educational Programs Levy can be used for a wide variety of purposes to support the district’s programs. The Safety, Technology, and Capital Improvements Levy can only be used for equipment, infrastructure, and major repairs/renovations of district facilities and grounds including structures, HVAC systems, roofs, parking lots, grounds, etc.

- Repair or replacement of HVAC systems in several schools
- Repair or replacement of ROOFS at various facilities across the district
- Repair, sealing, and/or resurfacing of PARKING LOTS and PLAYGROUNDS
Why does the district need additional capital improvement funding?

There are two reasons for the proposed increase—about $0.30/$1,000 of assessed value—in tax collections for this levy. First, we will need to make significant upgrades to several of the district’s HVAC systems that have already outlived their lifespan. These systems are costly to replace and very important to our students and staff. Second, reductions to the Educational Programs Levy will require that we find local funds from other sources to meet our repair, equipment replacement, and renovation needs across the district.

Maintenance and expansion of classroom TECHNOLOGY for students

Improvement of the district’s technology INFRASTRUCTURE, SOFTWARE, and DATA SYSTEMS

Expanded and improved SAFETY AND SECURITY technology

How much will be collected with this levy?

Voter approval of the Safety, Technology and Capital Improvements Levy will authorize the district to collect between $1,900,000 and $2,400,000 per year for the next four years. For detailed information about the district’s plan to utilize these funds, go to www.upsd.wednet.edu/Page/6572.
Upcoming Events

January 26  Ballots Mailed for Special Election
February 8  District Orchestra Festival
February 13  District Choir Festival
February 13  Special Election, Ballots Due
February 19-23  Mid-Winter Break
March 6  Kindergarten Registration Opens for 2018
March 8-10  Curtis High School’s Dance Blast
March 20  District Band Festival
March 23-24  Curtis Junior High School Musical
March 29-31  Curtis High School’s Production of Almost, Maine
March 31  Mother-daughter social

Regular Board Meetings

January 24  Education Service Center (ESC)
           E2 Academic Achievement Report
February 14  Curtis High School
February 28  Narrows View Intermediate
March 14   ESC Community Service Linkage
March 28   ESC E3 Contributing Citizens Report

Members of the public are encouraged to attend these meetings of the UPSD Board of Directors.

Board of Directors

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Annie Fitzsimmons — afitzsimmons@upsd83.org
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Contact Information