

Dear La Center Community Members,

Thank you for your continued dedication to the success of our schools and the education of our students. The district strives to provide high-quality educational opportunities that benefit our students and strengthen our community. As we look toward the future, I'd like to share important information about our district's achievements, challenges, and the replacement Educational Programs and Operations Levy in the upcoming February 11, 2025 Special Election.

Washington State has a constitutional obligation to fully fund education, however, there is a significant discrepancy between mandated expenditures and actual state funding provided. While the state requires districts to maintain specific staffing levels, programs, and services, their funding allocation covers only baseline costs, leaving districts to absorb substantial shortfalls. This replacement levy will enable the district to continue to bridge these critical funding gaps, meet state requirements and sustain essential programs and services. As responsible stewards of taxpayer resources, we maximize every dollar's impact through efficient and strategic allocation.

**District achievements and progress-** Our district has shown significant growth in several key areas. Nine out of fourteen tested areas demonstrated year-over-year improvement in student learning. The district will maintain our focus on student learning to continue our academic improvement. Our high school's performance is particularly noteworthy, with La Center High School ranking in the top four among Clark County high schools within English and mathematics proficiency. The class of 2024 achieved a 92% graduation rate, with graduates pursuing diverse paths.

**Career and Academic Programs-** We've significantly expanded our Advanced Placement (AP) program, growing from 3 courses and 30 AP tests in 2022-23 to 9 courses and 234 AP tests in 2023-24. For 2024-25, we continue to offer a variety of AP courses alongside Career and Technical Education (CTE) programs including baking, cooking/culinary, construction, and American Sign Language. These expansions reflect our commitment to preparing students to be career-ready by graduation, whether their path leads to trades, college, the military, or direct entry into the workforce.

**Financial Stewardship-** We've demonstrated fiscal responsibility by:

- Managing the lowest levy rate in the county, replacing the current levy that expires at the end of 2025, maintaining a \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value
- Securing \$863,511 in grant funds targeted for teacher professional development and student learning supports
- Maximizing Career and Technical Education funding from the state from \$400,000 in 23-24 to \$1.18 million in 24-25
- Actively seeking additional funding through grants and community partnerships

**Critical Needs and the Levy-** The upcoming replacement levy addresses several essential areas:

1. Classroom Support: Maintaining smaller K-3 class sizes and accommodating growth in high school AP and CTE courses while supporting students who struggle academically
2. Student Programs: Supporting middle school sports, extracurricular activities, and performing/visual arts programs
3. Professional Development: Continuing our commitment to teacher growth through specialized training in reading, mathematics, and instructional strategies
4. Infrastructure: Addressing critical maintenance needs in aging buildings, including safety upgrades, equipment repairs, and utility systems
5. Technology: Supporting Chromebook leasing, server upgrades, and required technology access for state assessments
6. Operating Costs: Managing utility and insurance costs that have increased by 28%, significantly outpacing revenue growth

We invite you to join us for a Levy Information Night on January 14, 2025, at 6:30 pm in the high school library. This event will provide an opportunity to learn more about the replacement levy, ask questions, and engage directly with district leadership. If you cannot attend, we will record the session for future viewing on the LCSD website, and you are always welcome to contact me at 360-263-2131.

Thank you for your continued partnership in strengthening our educational community. Together, we are making a lasting impact on the lives of our students and the future of La Center.

Sincerely,

Peter Rosenkranz, Superintendent

La Center School District