



POLICY CORNER

Action steps you can take immediately

1. Call Governor Inslee right now at (360) 902-4111 and ask him to fully fund public schools so they don't lay off teachers this spring.
2. Email the Governor by clicking here: <https://fortress.wa.gov/es/governor/>
3. Email or call your legislators. **Legislative District Number 34:**
 Sen. Sharon Nelson—
 206-435-7032
 Rep. Eileen Cody—
 206-389-2590
 Rep. Joe Fitzgibbon—
 206-435-7034
 For Friends and Family that are outside District 34, they can find their legislators here: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/DistrictFinder/> , and contact information here: <http://app.leg.wa.gov/Rosters/Members/Senate>
4. Key Talking Points:
 - Act by March 2017 to extend the "Levy Cliff" through the end of 2018
 - Commit to full funding of staff compensation for the 2017-18 school year
 - Fully fund public schools to avoid Teacher Lay Offs and Program Cuts this spring

POLICY CORNER is a new addition to the Gatewood PTA Newsletter designed to inform readers of current Advocacy Needs. As Members of the Washington State PTA (WSPTA), Gatewood PTA advocates the adopted legislative priorities and other supported issues of the WSPTA, reviewable [HERE](#). Gatewood PTA advocates contacting State Representatives, Senators, and the Governor's Office to express your support for Fully Funding Education.

Education Funding Crisis

Seattle Public Schools are facing a budget crisis with a looming levy cliff. The State has given school districts across Washington a double whammy this year. They have failed to fully fund basic education as originally promised by the start of 2018 (i.e. the 2017-18 school year) AND legislation passed in 2010 reduces money local districts can collect from local "operations" levies as of January 2018. As a result, the Seattle School District is facing an estimated \$74 million shortfall for school year 2017-18.

Every person in our community is encouraged to make calls and send emails to elected officials asking them to take steps to extend the "Levy Cliff" through the end of 2018 while also committing to full funding of staff compensation for the 2017-2018 school year. It is imperative they fully fund public schools to reduce Teacher Lay Offs.

Resources with additional information about the budget crisis

- SPS District Budget Deficit webpage, with additional details regarding the budget deficit, budget development timeline, and actions you can take: <http://www.seattleschools.org/cms/One.aspx?portalId=627&pageId=16682292>
- Washington Paramount Duty: <http://paramountduty.org/>
- 2017 Levy Cliff Impact analysis: <http://www.k12.wa.us/SAFS/default.asp>
- Washington State Board of Education: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/legislative.php#.WEiGh4WcGM8>
- Learn more about PTA advocacy at: <http://scptsa.org/advocacy/>



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Upcoming Meetings: Gatewood PTA Encourages Everyone to Attend!

Community Budget Gap Meetings

Between Dec. 5, 2016 and Jan. 4, 2017 the District will continue to solicit feedback on budget priorities from staff, families, and community partners. The Seattle Council PTSA is hosting three regional meetings for families to provide feedback on budget priorities.

- **Tuesday, December 13**, Ballard High School, 6:30—8:00 PM.; 1418 NW 65th St Seattle, WA 98117
- **Thursday, December 15**, South Shore PreK-8 School, 6:30—8:00 PM; 4800 S Henderson St Seattle, WA 98118
- **Tuesday, January 3**, Franklin High School, 6:30—8:00 PM; 3013 S Mt Baker Blvd Seattle, WA 98144

At these meetings, Seattle Schools staff will explain the budget numbers, and PTA members and the community can collaborate on actions we can take together to motivate the Legislature to act.

Community Meeting with Director Leslie Harris

Saturday, December 17, 1:00—3:00 PM, Delridge Library, 5423 Delridge Way SW

Come talk with School Board Vice President and West Seattle School Board Director Leslie Harris at her monthly community meeting. Learn more about the Levy Cliff, and let your voice be heard. Click here for more information about Leslie Harris: http://seattleschools.org/district/school_board/district_six/

School Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 4, 4:15—8:00 PM Auditorium, John Stanford Center, 2445 3rd Ave. S, Seattle, WA 98134.

Join parents from across the district to weigh in on the coming budget gap, and what can be done about it.

Gatewood PTA Meeting

Monday, January 9, 6:30 PM, Gatewood Cafeteria. This General Meeting will feature special guest speaker Heidi Bennett who will break down the Levy Cliff situation and answer questions. All families are highly encouraged to attend. PTA will be providing Child Care. This event will also include Somali and Spanish translations.

Heidi Bennett has been an education advocate for over 10 years — working with PTA/PTSA, League of Education Voters, and School's First (Seattle Levy Campaign). Actively involved with WA State PTA, Seattle Council PTA and local units, she has educated parents on a variety of advocacy issues, including simple majority, school levies, the Basic Education Bills, and Funding. She is a regular down in Olympia where she advocates for education in Washington State, as well as at the Seattle Public Schools offices where she serves on various task forces and committees.

Focus Day, Olympia WA:

Monday, January 16. Please consider attending Focus Day to rally with parents, teachers and community members. Big numbers will make a big impact with the legislature. Let's amplify our voices together. Contact Alex Olins, Gatewood PTA Secretary for more information alexandraolins@gmail.com. For more information about Focus Day, go to http://www.wastatepta.org/meetings/focus_day/index.html