



City of Seattle
Mayor Jenny A. Durkan

April 23, 2018

Honorable Bruce A. Harrell, President
Seattle City Council
City Hall, 2nd Floor
Seattle, WA 98199

Dear Council President Harrell:

I am pleased to transmit the attached legislation that will support the City's ongoing efforts to close the opportunity gap and achieve education equity in access to high-quality early learning services, K-12 school and community-based, and post-secondary opportunities needed for all children and students to be academically successful and attain a certificate, credential or degree of their choice. Closing opportunity gaps is essential if we want to ensure Seattle's youth, particularly African-American/Black, Hispanic/Latino, Native American, other students of color, LGBTQ, and students from historically underserved groups, are prepared for the jobs of the future and have real economic opportunity. Toward that end, the Families, Education, Preschool, and Promise (FEPP) Levy takes a comprehensive approach to address this readiness challenge through investments in preschool, K-12 and community, school-based health, and the Seattle Promise College Tuition Program.

Crafting the FEPP Levy proposal began over six months ago through engagement with the community in dozens of meetings where important feedback was collected to inform this package. The proposal also includes many of the priorities I have heard from you and your fellow Councilmembers from our conversations and meetings over recent months. The feedback we received has overall resulted in a proposal that provides a holistic approach to prepare young children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed, support K-12 students to achieve academically and graduate from high school college and job ready, and create a pathway to attain a post-secondary certificate, credential, or degree.

Preschool

In 2014, voters approved a four-year levy to fund a demonstration pilot of the Seattle Preschool Program—the City's voluntary, affordable, high-quality preschool program. Since officially launching in 2015, the program has grown to serve over 1,000 children. The research is clear that quality preschool provides a strong academic, social and emotional foundation that can benefit children throughout their lives. We need to build on that success which is why this legislation proposes to expand access to the Seattle Preschool Program and build the capacity and infrastructure needed to create the world-class early learning system our children deserve.

K-12 School and Community-Based Investments

Closing the opportunity gap continues to be a challenge in our schools, where disparities persist in educational aspirations, achievement and attainment for historically-underserved students. To realize

the full potential of our youth and empower them to overcome Seattle's challenges of today and tomorrow, we need to support our schools to make sure every student is college and job ready. Through partnerships with school and community-based organizations, including cultural and language-based organizations, FEPP Levy investments are designed to meet students' academic, social and emotional needs. These partnerships will provide expanded learning opportunities to ensure access to year-round learning including tutoring, mentoring, STEM, culturally-responsive supports, and increasing student preparedness for post-secondary opportunities.

K-12 School Health

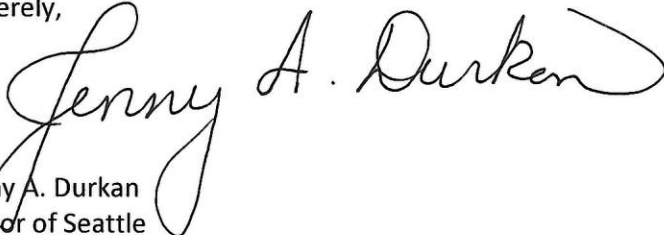
To achieve the academic goals of our students, we need to ensure they come to school healthy and ready to learn. Addressing physical and mental health concerns proactively reduces barriers to learning, minimizes absenteeism, and promotes readiness to learn in the classroom. School based health centers (SBHCs) are proven to reduce rates of school suspension and high school dropout as well as increase student grade point averages for student users. This legislation continues investments for SBHCs (and adds funding to open three additional SBHCs at two middle schools and one high school), oral and mental health, and school nurses.

Seattle Promise College Tuition Program

In today's labor market, a college certificate, credential, or degree has become a necessary asset to obtain a living wage job. By 2020, 70% of all jobs in Washington State will require some post-secondary education. The Seattle Promise College Tuition Program will provide access to two years of free college tuition for Seattle public school graduates. The program will also deploy the necessary support to help students navigate the college-going process while in high school, through the summer, and once they step foot on campus so they can persist to earn their certificate, credential, or degree.

I acknowledge that there will be additional ideas that the Council formulates through this process, so I look forward to working closely with you as adjustments are made. Thank you for your consideration and for further questions, please do not hesitate to contact Dwane Chappelle, Department of Education and Early Learning Director at (206) 684-4508.

Sincerely,



Jenny A. Durkan
Mayor of Seattle

cc: Honorable Members of the Seattle City Council