From: Superintendent <superintendent@seattleschools.org>
Date: April 2, 2020 at 11:22:48 AM PDT
Subject: Superintendent Message: Childcare update

Dear Staff,

As you are aware, Governor Inslee directed school districts to help provide childcare for health workers and first responders who are on the frontlines of our community's COVID-19 response. We answered this call, while also focusing on our mission to ensure our students have access to food and continuous learning during this time.

Last week we learned that the City of Seattle made it a requirement that in order to keep our PreK City levy funding, the district must provide childcare using SPS educational staff. SPS currently employees 80 people with this funding. As a result, we asked members of our Seattle Education Association to sign up to support this effort. We understand that educators and childcare workers are two separate professions, and that the required skillsets are different. That has been our stance from the beginning of the Governor's directive.

While we had been working in partnership with the Seattle Education Association about the details of how to step into this space, we learned early this morning that SEA members have serious concerns about providing this care. We understand the multiple complexities inherent in all of these decisions and will continue to work with the City and other Community Based Organizations to find ways to best ensure our health care providers, First Responders and other essential workers have access to childcare.

At this time, we are calling upon our local leaders to come together and find solutions. We are urging city leaders to continue funding community-based organizations to provide this childcare, while the school district will provide facilities, meals, and the necessary cleaning aligned with Public Health guidelines.

We will no longer be asking our SPS educators to sign up to provide childcare. We want you to focus on providing our students with continuous learning in creative ways.

Denise