



## MERCER ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT #400

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[www.mercerislandschools.org](http://www.mercerislandschools.org)

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### BOARD OF DIRECTORS

March 22, 2018

Members of the City Council  
City of Mercer Island  
9611 SE 36<sup>th</sup> Street  
Mercer Island, WA 98040

Re: City Levy Lid Lift for MIYFS Mental Health Counseling

Dear Honorable City Council Members:

On behalf of the Mercer Island School District (“District”), we want to express our appreciation of your current financial support of the City’s Mercer Island Youth and Family Services (“MIYFS”) mental health counselors who provide counseling services for children, adolescents and their families to promote health, emotional and interpersonal development and provide substance abuse prevention services. We are truly fortunate to have a City Council and a community that value the mental health of each and every one of our Island youth.

As you may know, community mental health counseling co-located at public schools is a best practice model to:

- i) *Prevent Youth Suicide*: Teenage suicide is the second leading cause of death for 10 to 24-year-olds. Each week in Washington State<sup>123</sup> two youth kill themselves and seventeen are hospitalized because of suicide attempts.
- ii) *Prevent community & School-based Gun Violence*<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Injury Prevention and Control. Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) [online]. (2016) Available from URL: [www.cdc.gov/injury/qisqars](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/qisqars). Accessed March 7, 2018.

<sup>2</sup> Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Death Certificate Records (2013 release). Available at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InjuryandViolencePrevention/data.aspx>. Accessed on March 11, 2018.

<sup>3</sup> Washington State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics, Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS – 2013 release). Available at: <http://www.doh.wa.gov/YouandYourFamily/InjuryandViolencePrevention/Data.aspx>. Accessed on March 11, 2018.


<sup>4</sup> An Interdisciplinary Group on Preventing School and Community Violence, A Call for Action to Prevent Gun Violence in the United States of America, February 28, 2018. <https://curry.virginia.edu/prevent-gun-violence>


We also sincerely appreciate the partnership and cooperation between the District staff, MIYFS counselors and the Mercer Island Police Department. This nearly 25-year inter-agency collaboration supported by our community illustrates the tremendous value Mercer Islanders place on the safety, mental health and social emotional development of our youth. Further, we recognize the positive community impact created by MIYFS counseling services offered outside of our schools. The benefits to the entire community, including seniors and others, from MIYFS services improve the overall health and safety of all of our residents.


Given the importance and community priority of MIYFS counseling services and recognizing the City's current operational challenges, the Board of Directors would like to request that the City Council consider a 6-year stand-alone levy for the MIYFS Counseling Services. Such a levy would allow Mercer Island residents the opportunity to support a semi-permanent and sustainable funding model for these critical services, not only for the students in our schools, but for the community at large.

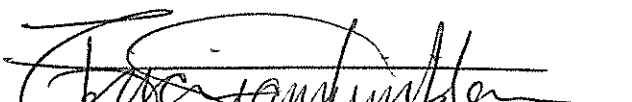
The Board of Directors approved this letter at its March 22, 2018, regular meeting and very much appreciate your consideration of this request.


Sincerely,  
Mercer Island School District, Board of Directors

  
Tracy Drinkwater, President

  
Ralph Jorgenson, Vice President

  
David D'Souza, Director

  
Brian Gianni Upton, Director

  
Deborah Lurie, Director

cc: Julie Underwood, City Manager;  
Community Advisory Group ("CAG") through City Manager