



## **City of Seattle Families and Education Levy (FEL) Backgrounder**

### *History of Levy 1990-2010*

#### ***Successfully improving the lives of Seattle's students since 1990***

Seattle voters passed the first Families and Education Levy in November 1990, the result of a grassroots effort initiating the City's role in education. Under Mayor Norman B. Rice the City held an education summit to bring together more than 2,000 individuals from all sectors of the community including educators, parents, students, business people, community activists, government employees and the general public. A clear message emerged from the summit: Seattle residents wanted to be involved in helping the public school system. Helping all children to be "safe, healthy and ready to learn" became the goal of the 1990 Families and Education Levy, which invested in out-of-classroom services aimed to improve the education of every child.

The ground-breaking initiative provided support to children and their families, both in and out of school, and was designed to help all Seattle's children become school ready, succeed academically, and graduate from high school.

The investments in schools and communities throughout Seattle proved so effective that voters renewed the levy in 1997 for another seven-year term. That \$69 million levy supported programs in five areas, contributing to the success of children around the city and closely mirrored the 1990 FEL investments.

#### ***Outcomes-Focused Approach to Children and Youth Investments***

Beginning in 2002, under Mayor Greg Nickels, the City began to approach children and youth investments from a data-driven perspective. The City analyzed the state of children and youth in Seattle— with respect to family income, educational achievement and health – and found that children of color and those living in poverty or low-income communities were faring substantially worse than their peers in other neighborhoods.

Renewed for a second time in 2004, the new Levy focused on helping these particular communities succeed academically and closing the achievement gap. Levy investments would improve outcomes for children of color and low-income children and raise the bar for all students by improving graduation rates and academic achievement by focusing investments on strategies tailored to schools and students in need.