September 8, 2015

Dear School Administrators:

I would like to announce that the 2015 Great Washington ShakeOut registration is now open. The Great Washington ShakeOut campaign is designed to provide a sense of urgency about earthquake preparedness. It is specifically designed to encourage people, organizations, schools, and communities to get ready, practice what to do to be safe, and to learn what components of safety plans need to be improved. The campaign message is simple: "Drop, Cover, and Hold On and do at least one more thing to be earthquake-ready."

It is important that we participate in this earthquake preparation drill. The Northwest is one of the most seismically active regions in the world and Washington is especially vulnerable to earthquakes.

Washington will join its western neighbors in Oregon, Idaho, California, and British Columbia in the 2015 Great ShakeOut earthquake drill on Thursday, October 15 at 10:15 a.m. Millions are expected to participate in simultaneous "Drop, Cover, and Hold On" drill which will emphasize the importance of emergency preparedness.

In school settings, this drill will not only educate our students on what to do and how to react in the event of an earthquake, but it will also encourage thinking about emergency preparedness in general, and risk reduction measures. Schools should embrace this opportunity to assess their structural and nonstructural risks, and follow up with actions such as securing bookcases and other loose objects in classrooms.

The Great Washington ShakeOut is organized by the Washington State Emergency Management (EMD), Washington Department of Natural Resources (DNR), the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), the U.S. Geological Survey (USGS), Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), and the Washington State Seismic Safety Committee.

I offer my support for this project, as it aims to prepare all participants with important skills and knowledge for earthquake safety. I encourage you to register your schools and districts at http://www.shakeout.org/washington/register. If you have any questions regarding the Great Washington ShakeOut or how to participate, please contact John Schelling, Earthquake Program Manager, Washington State Emergency Management, by phone at 253-512-7084, or email at john.schelling@mil.wa.gov.

Sincerely,

Randy I. Dorn
State Superintendent
of Public Instruction