



Rural Education Center

Jim Kowalkowski, Director
jkowalkowski@davenportdsd.org
Web Site: <http://ruraledcenter.wsu.edu/>
In Partnership with...
Washington State University & NEWESD 101

Housed at Davenport School District
801 7th Street
Davenport, WA 99122
Ph.: (509)725-1481 • Fax: (509) 725-2260

Brief Legislative Update

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REC Members,

With so much of the education funding discussions among legislators taking place behind closed doors as this current session comes to an end and a special session will begin sometime following, I wanted to share with you some thoughts. I know that many of you are communicating regularly with your state legislators and you may want to share some of these thoughts as well. It is very important that they hear from folks “on the ground” regarding the impacts to our schools, students, staff and community.



Topic: Salary Allocation Model (SAM) & Staff Mix—We “Gotta Have This!”

I have met with numerous legislators from both sides of the aisle during this session and I have been very vocal in stating that there needs to be some type of salary allocation model/schedule along with a staff mix that is included in the final compromise solution regarding salaries. The SAM & the staff-mix allow us as small and rural districts to at least offer a base salary that is the same as most other districts in the state. That is very important as we deal with an increasing educator shortage. The staff mix allows us to hire an individual with experience and not worry that this hire “will cost us too much”. If we lose the staff mix, I am very worried that we will have to settle for the least expensive teacher instead of the best one we can find. That would be a tragedy and is unacceptable!

Both the Senate & House funding proposals include increasing the starting teacher pay—that is a good thing! However, if we are stuck with having to locally negotiate a salary schedule regarding all of our other teachers, we are going to be faced with dilemmas such as, “Do we purchase new curriculum material and equipment or do we increase salaries for all teachers? Providing for compensation for teachers is a state responsibility! We have to have some type of a salary allocation model/schedule. Several of us have met on numerous times with Senator Mark Mullet. In his funding proposal, he includes a robust SAM and staff mix and he is working with key legislators to help get this included in the final deal.

Topic: Education Funding Plans & Local M & O Levies – Study the Proposals Very Carefully!

As you know the Senate & House education funding plans have very different approaches regarding local levies. The Senate plan relies on a “levy swap”—they call this “Local Effort Levy” dollars. There will be no M & O levies allowed in 2019—that will be very detrimental to almost every district in the state. OSPI has developed a “Multi-Year Comparison Tool” that provides estimated impacts for the 2018-19, 2019-20 & 20120-21 school years. Go to this link to use this tool:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SAFS/17budprp.asp>

Another good resource for comparing the various plans can be found at

<http://fiscal.wa.gov/OtherResources.aspx#k12>

Note: The comparisons and projections on these estimates from the Office of Program Research include an automatic assumed increase in enrollment. Some of our districts are dealing with declining enrollment. So the actual revenue estimates will vary from what is shown on the tables.



Do Your Homework!

My business manager and I have spent some time calculating the impacts on our district, including what would the total of our local M & O levy rate and the new “Local Effort Levy rate – Levy Swap) would be and are sharing it with key legislators. I have attached this document to my email for your reference. I encourage you to take the time to dig into the numbers and see what the potential impacts are for your district and then “tell your story”.

More information to follow but I do encourage you to reach out to lawmakers and let them know your thoughts. Our children are counting on us!

Please let me know if you have any questions or if I can be of any assistance to you.



Jim Kowalkowski

Director – Rural Education Center

& Superintendent – Davenport School District

Work Phone: 509-725-1481

Cell Phone: 509-721-0277