Regional Legislative Priorities: Equalizing student opportunities for 2019

The superintendents of the 25 public school districts in south central Washington’s ESD 105 region encourage Washington’s legislators to address these proposals during 2019 for strengthening and equalizing Washington’s public education system:

Improve school safety and security
We urge the legislature to improve school safety by supporting the School Nurses Initiative and to establish a network of comprehensive school safety centers through the state’s Educational Service Districts that could coordinate the following services for schools:
• Training of teachers and school staff to serve as first responders during an emergency before the time outside help can arrive.
• Staffing of mental and behavioral health counselors.
• Support for threat assessment training, prevention planning, disaster preparedness training, and crisis response and community recovery services.
• Implementation and monitoring of technology-based systems to improve communication between schools and emergency responders.

Resolve the funding inequities created under EHB 2242 and SB 6362
Portions of the new education financial structure from EHB 2242 and SB 6463 still require revisions in order to resolve inequities in how schools are funded and are able to operate with best effectiveness.
• Funding inequities widened by capping the levy authority of property-rich school districts at a higher level than neighboring property-poor districts, while diminishing levy capacity for all districts at the same time. Revise the limit on Local Effort Assistance so it is equalized to a standard $2,500 for all school districts.
• Initiate a statewide salary schedule for school employees, thereby eliminating the time, inequities between neighboring school districts, and other negative consequences that arose throughout nearly all of Washington’s individual school districts during 2018.
• Fully fund the cost of implementing the School Employee Benefits Board and/or delay this until it can be fully funded.
• Fully fund special education by increasing the multiplier to cover its real cost.
• Create a graduated experience factor for certificated staff.
• Consider bargaining at the state level for school salaries and benefits and/or clearly define limits on salary increases.

Three updates for supporting school facilities
• Advance a constitutional amendment to the voters of Washington that would authorize school district bond issues to be approved by a simple majority vote.
• Update the current outdated funding formulas for the Construction Cost Allowance and Student Space Allocation to ensure funding more closely reflects actual construction costs and educational space needs.
• Supply equal learning opportunities among school districts that have difficulty passing local bonds by providing those school districts with capital funds to support necessary new construction or modernization.

Expand available state resources
Develop more revenue sources into the state in order to properly sustain an equitable and ample basic education funding system for Washington’s school programs that prevents the need for future reductions in educational services.
A look at our region’s schools:

ESD 105 School Districts
With enrollments (May 2018) & Budgeted Expenditures (2017-18)

Bickleton (Supt. Tom Whitemore): 116 students • $2,425,283
Cle Elum-Roslyn (Supt. Gary Wargo): 922 students • $11,029,855
Damman (Supt. Marsha Smith): 39 students • $1,081,056
East Valley (Supt. John Schieche): 3,277 students • $38,828,361
Easton (Supt. Patrick Dehuff): 103 students • $2,681,064
Ellensburg (Supt. Jinger Haberer): 3,370 students • $40,756,700
Goldendale (Supt. Ian Grabenhorst): 973 students • $13,079,450
Grandview (Supt. Henry Strom): 3,370 students • $46,302,365
Granger (Supt. Brian Hart): 1,470 students • $20,220,419
Highland (Supt. Mark Anderson): 1,142 students • $15,272,991
Kittitas (Supt. Rich Stewart): 699 students • $8,259,859
Mabton (Supt. Joey Castilleja): 873 students • $12,284,544
Mt. Adams (Supt. Curt Guaglioni): 898 students • $14,272,374
Naches Valley (Supt. Duane Lyons): 1,334 students • $16,442,020
Royal (Supt. Roger Trail): 1,749 students • $21,229,213
Selah (Supt. Shane Backlund): 3,732 students • $43,772,158
Sunnyside (Supt. Kevin McKay): 6,910 students • $81,798,648
Thorp (Supt. Andrew Perkins): 186 students • $3,021,407
Toppenish (Supt. John Cerna): 4,667 students • $55,037,338
Union Gap (Supt. Lisa Gredvig): 624 students • $8,786,101
Wahluke (Supt. Robert Eckert): 2,409 students • $29,462,781
Wapato (Supt. Becky Imler): 3,363 students • $42,749,526
West Valley (Supt. Mike Brophy): 5,536 students • $53,653,022
Yakima (Supt. Jack Irion): 15,974 students • $220,845,900
Zillah (Supt. Doug Burge): 1,309 students • $15,029,280

25 Public School Districts:
65,207 students (May 2018)
3,765 teachers

3.3% American Indian/Alaskan Native
0.7% Asian/Pacific Islander
0.5% Black
64.5% Hispanic
28.9% White
2.1% Bi-Racial
68.4% Low Income
(11 school districts at 72% or higher; 5 above 90%)
14% in Special Education
25.7% English Language Learners
(10 school districts at 32.5% to 46.3%; 1 at 57.7%)
10.2% Migrant Students
(21 of 25 school districts have migrant students; 6 at 10.2% to 16.8% migrant students; 2 at 20.3% to 23%; 1 at 32%)
(Figures taken from counts reported to OSPI for 2017-2018.)

23 State-Approved Private & Tribal Schools:
• 2,169 students • 204 teachers
(Student and teacher figures from counts taken during 2017-2018.)

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