Small School Districts in Washington State

CHARACTERISTICS, EXPERIENCES, SUCCESSES, & CHALLENGES

PRESENTATION TO
HOUSE EDUCATION COMMITTEE
JANUARY 19, 2015

JIM KOWALKOWSKI,
SUPERINTENDENT - DAVENPORT SCHOOL DISTRICT
DIRECTOR – RURAL EDUCATION CENTER
• Davenport School District
  • 575 students
  • K-12 district
  • Home of the Gorillas!

• Rural Education Center
  • Statewide cooperative of over 70 small and rural districts and several educational organizations, including ESD’s.
  • Program support received from the College of Education at Washington State University
Small Districts

✓ Thank you for this opportunity
✓ Four years ago a large group of us were here to encourage this committee to not “reorganize” school districts
Small, yet Mighty!

Lessons from Evelyn!
Washington’s Small School Districts

• Lessons from Evelyn
  ➢ We may be small, but we are mighty!
  ➢ We sometimes need some extra support
    ➢ ESD’s
    ➢ Small High Funding
  ➢ We are strong
  ➢ We offer comprehensive programs for our students in a safe and caring environment
  ➢ We have tremendous community support
  ➢ We offer many amazing programs for our students
Washington’s Small School Districts

Often the “Center of the Community”

✓ School facilities are used heavily by the community
✓ The school is often the “designated shelter” during emergencies
✓ Pateros School Example
Washington’s Small School Districts

Tremendous Community Pride for Our Small School Districts
Washington’s Small School Districts

Davenport High School Hall Lockers

✓ No locks!
Trout Lake Robotics team goes to Nationals

On April 28, 2011 - Leave a Comment

From the foot of Mt. Adams to the Midwest, the school in Trout Lake is sending its first ever robotics team to the national championships in St. Louis this week.

Only about 60 students are enrolled in the high school. Nine kids are on the team.

Principal Doug Dearden says his school was by far the smallest competing at the regional competition in Oregon last month, and they’ll likely be competing against teams from much larger schools again.

This is the first year Trout Lake has sponsored a robotics team. Corporate sponsors include a sand and gravel company, a rafting company, and the high-tech company Insitu, which makes drones for the U.S. military.
## Washington’s Small School Districts

✅ Teachers usually have many “preps”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teacher</th>
<th>Per 1</th>
<th>Per 2</th>
<th>Per 3</th>
<th>Per 4</th>
<th>Per 5</th>
<th>Per 6</th>
<th>Per 7</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mr. Fisk</td>
<td>Biology</td>
<td>Physical Science</td>
<td>Chemistry</td>
<td>Anatomy / Physiology</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>COE Biology</td>
<td>Weight Lifting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Parsons</td>
<td>Culminating Projects</td>
<td>English 10</td>
<td>Prep</td>
<td>English 9</td>
<td>Spanish 1</td>
<td>Spanish 2</td>
<td>Spanish 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mrs. Schweiger</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>3rd Grade</td>
<td>Prep and Travel</td>
<td>Advanced Art</td>
<td>MS Art</td>
<td>HS Art</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Washington’s Small School Districts

✓ Many offer “dual credit” courses
  ✓ College in the High School
  ✓ Running Start
  ✓ Tech Prep
  ✓ Advanced Placement (AP)
Washington’s Small School Districts

The majority of Washington State rural schools are small. These rural school districts collectively have higher graduation rates and low dropout rates.

CENTER for RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS
Capital Region ESD 113
Washington’s Small School Districts

Washington State had 25 schools that graduated 100% of their **Class of 2013** cohort on-time in 4 years & 76% (n=19) of them were in small rural school districts.

**CENTER for RESEARCH & DATA ANALYSIS**

**Capital Region ESD 113**
Washington’s Small School Districts

✓ Despite significant challenges, our small schools are doing amazing work
Washington’s Small School Districts

- Very high degree of transparency
  - Elementary: Many of our small school districts have one teacher per grade level
  - Secondary: Many of our small districts have one high school teacher per academic subject
Highly Dependent on Small High Funding

- Small district high schools with enrollments less than 300 receive enhanced funding
- This funding enables a small high school to offer a comprehensive program so that students can be offered required courses for graduation
Washington’s Small School Districts

Very dependent on services from the Educational Service Districts

- Fiscal services support
- Professional development
- Cooperatives:
  - Special Ed.
  - Technology
  - Workers’ Comp
  - Nurse’s Corp
  - Cooperatives
  - Grant Writing and Management
Washington’s Small School Districts

- Administrators Wear Many Hats
  - Bill Wadlington, Creston School District
    - Superintendent
    - Principal – K-12
    - Curriculum Director
    - Bus Driver (Field Trips)
    - Junior High Football Coach
    - Title 1 & LAP Director
    - Special Ed. Director
    - Human Resources Director
Washington’s Small School Districts

- Most small schools have a “no cut” policy for extra-curricular and co-curricular activities
  - Athletics
  - Clubs
- A high percentage of students participate
Washington’s Small School Districts

In desperate need of state funded professional development for staff

✓ Districts are required to implement significant reform, yet we use levy dollars to fund training for our staff
✓ Learning Improvement Days are no longer funded by the State
✓ Advantage of being small: we can get all of our staff in one room!
Washington’s Small School Districts

Many are very dependent on levy equalization funds

✓ Most of our small and rural schools are located in “property poor” areas
✓ LEA funds are vital and essential to our small districts
Requests from Small Districts

✓ Please do not give us more mandates
✓ Allow us time to deeply implement and prepare our staff and students for:
  ✓ TPEP
  ✓ Common Core State Standards
  ✓ Smarter Balanced Assessments
  ✓ Next Gen Science Standards
  ✓ Increased Graduation Requirements
Washington’s Small School Districts

✓ Teachers and support staff are feeling overwhelmed with the amount of reform in our schools.

✓ This is not a complaint. It is a reality.

✓ Please visit our schools...every chance you get!
Meeting Highly Qualified Teacher (HQT) Requirements is a Significant Challenge

Recommendation:

- Allow the use of the HOUSSE form/process that was permissible until August 31, 2014.

Note: In 2013, the U.S. Department of Education strongly encouraged the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to limit the use of the HOUSSE form in all areas with the exception of special education. The effective date for limiting district use of the Points-Based HOUSSE was August 31, 2014.
Lessons from Evelyn

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Questions?