

Consolidation Discussion

WSSDA Regional
Meeting

March 23, 2010



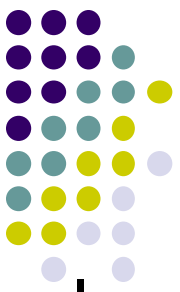
**Jim Kowalkowski, Supt.
Davenport S.D. &
Director, Rural Ed. Center**



“We gotta do something!”

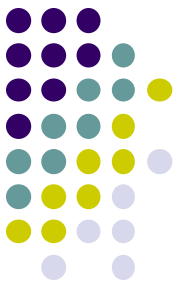


Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



- **1889** – Just prior to statehood, standards in rural schools begin to improve. Teachers are required to have more training, and additional courses are added to the curriculum.
- **1889** – Washington become a state!
- **1903** – Legislation is enacted to encourage the consolidation of districts to support high schools and grammar schools.
- Consolidation leads to the closure of increasing numbers of early schools and results in larger, brick schools being built both in urban and rural school districts.

Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



- **1946** - Consolidations close 78% of the one room schools (each a school district) operating in the state during 1937 to 1946.
- **1946** - A commitment to continuing consolidations is urged, with a goal of 210 unified districts and 70 remote or isolated districts.



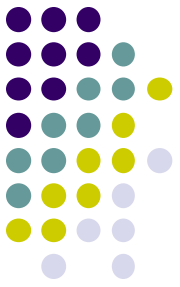
Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



- **Castle Rock agrees to take all Vader students**
- By Barbara LaBoe | Posted: Wednesday, **May 9, 2007**
- CASTLE ROCK — Saying it's in everyone's best interest to keep Vader students together, the Castle Rock School Board Tuesday agreed to absorb the entire district if it closes this summer.
The Vader School Board also approved the deal Tuesday.
- Negotiations between Vader's five contiguous neighboring districts — Castle Rock, Toledo, Winlock, Longview and Boistfort — began after the third and final levy and bond failures in March. Officials quickly decided not to further disrupt the students and families by splitting the district up, Castle Rock Superintendent Rick Wilde said Tuesday.
- Castle Rock is the only district with room for all 86 of Vader's k-8 students, so all the districts agreed Castle Rock would take Vader lock, stock and barrel.



Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State

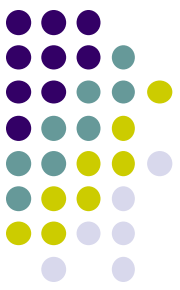


● 2009

Legislative
Session...

Governor's Budget Proposal...

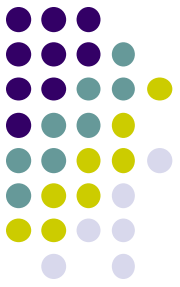
2009 Legislative Session



The superintendent of public instruction is to conduct the following activity to identify efficiencies in the organization and structure of school districts:

The superintendent **shall** make recommendations for a **streamlined school district consolidation process**, develop appropriate criteria, and provide needed statutory goals to meet the following goals:

- Reduce operating costs;
- Reduce administrative duplication; and
- Create efficiencies to offer better programmatic opportunities to students.

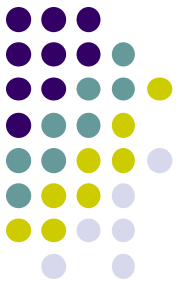


Governor's Budget Proposal...

2009 Legislative



Recommendations shall also include specific proposals for realigned school districts.



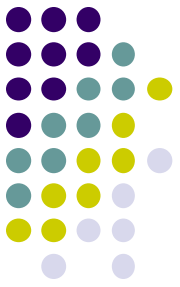
- “When nearly a third of our high school students do not graduate on time with their peers, we have work to do. We must design our middle and high schools so that no student gets lost in the crowd and disconnected from his or her own potential. “

[Christine Gregoire](#)

BrainyQuote

www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/christine_gregoire.html

Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



● 2010

Legislative
Session...

Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State—What is currently happening?



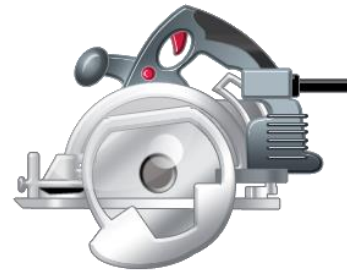
- 2010 Legislative Session
 - Representative Sam Hunt introduces **HB 2616** which would create a commission on statewide school district reorganization
 - This commission SHALL develop and recommend a comprehensive plan..the plan SHALL result in no more than 150 school district in the state.
 - The plan SHALL also result in reorganization of the number and boundaries of ESD's



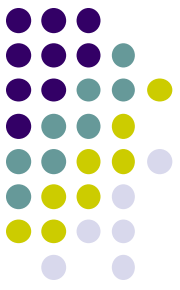
Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



- 2010 Legislative Session
 - HB 2616 was “pulled” by House Education Chair Dave Quall. WASA and WSSDA were very vocal about this bill.
 - Chair Quall decided to have a work session regarding the ideas in HB 2616
 - See handout...HB 2616



Quick Review of Consolidation Efforts in WA State



- 2010 Legislative Session
 - A few weeks ago, we assumed that there would be no more talk regarding forced consolidation of school districts during this session.
 - But, the plot thickens!
 - SB 6444 (Senate Budget Bill) was adopted by the Senate Ways and Means Committee late at night on Feb. 26.
 - An amendment was added to this bill that will establish a commission to review school district and ESD boundaries (the 150 number was stricken)

Senate Bill 6444 is approved by the Senate on Saturday, Feb. 27



- Even though a bill on “reorganization” of school districts and ESD’s was never heard in the Senate, the language was put into the budget!





The Senate kicks the budget bill back to the House..

- The language regarding consolidation and reorganization is deleted by the House...
- **New language is added:** SPI must analyze the feasibility of increasing efficiencies and economies of scale in school district administration and non-instructional operations through shared-service arrangements and school district cooperatives. **The analysis shall include an examination of administrative efficiencies achieved through school district cooperatives currently in place and strategies to replicate best practices.** A report is due to fiscal committees by December 15, 2010.

What happens next?



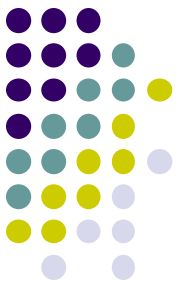
- Waiting on passage of final budget bill—House language stands (as of now)
- JLARC Study on the relationship between cost and size of school districts is due in June—see handout
- We have provided detailed information to JLARC staff

Insights and Comments



- The issue of consolidation is not just a “small district issue”
- Next legislative session: This could be a significant issue
- Will small districts become victims to “ample funding”?

Interesting State Board Report from 1984



Report of the School District Reorganization Committee of the State Board of Education – 1994

A measure was introduced into the 1993 Washington legislative session that would have dissolved school districts (not schools) with enrollments of 150 or fewer students in grades K-8. As a result a committee was created with the charge to study the impact of further school consolidations in Washington State. The committee was to consider the financial, educational and community impact of school consolidations.

BRIEF HISTORY OF SCHOOL DISTRICT ORGANIZATION

Between 1910 and 1994, the number of school districts in Washington State declined from 2,710 to 296, a decrease of 2,414 districts. From 1980 to 1994, only four consolidations have occurred. Washington's history has followed the national experience over the same 84 year period. At both the national and state levels there were two primary goals generally driving consolidations over the cited time frame: 1) provide high school students, primarily, with a broader choice of educational courses and extracurricular activities; and 2) avoid unnecessary duplication of administrative structures and costs.

Over this time frame, these goals were assisted by the development of the interstate and intrastate road systems and by calls for the closure of any high school with fewer than 100 students. Perhaps the following statement sums up the history of consolidation, "In many ways, the decline of the small school district has paralleled the decline of the small towns whose local functions were usurped by nearby larger communities who were able to provide a larger range of goods and services."

FINDINGS & COMMENTS

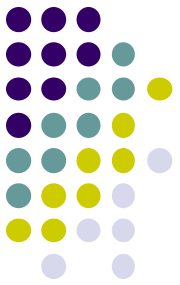
The pre-1970 research essentially asserts the "bigger is better" argument, both from a fiscal perspective (i.e., economy of scale...the financial benefits realized as a function of increased size of an organization), as well as from an academic perspective (students will get increased curriculum opportunities in larger districts). The post-1970 research clearly both challenges the assumptions behind the pre-1970 research and even now simply makes the opposite claims.

Actually, according to a 1991 study titled, The Financial Effects of Consolidation, there is research showing that there can be financial disadvantages associated with the increased size of an organization.

The state's school system is comprised of 296 unique school districts (communities), ranging in size from big to medium to small. Each city and town is populated by residents, who, by and large, have elected to live in their community because it suits them. In virtually every community across the state, a common binding experience shared by all is the importance of the local school(s). Especially in smaller locations, the school system is often the key point of identity and pride for the community.

When fiscal resources are tight it is entirely appropriate for the state to look for greater efficiencies. While residents of the state's communities have an obligation to recognize and respect the need for the state to be cost-efficient, the state also needs to recognize and respect the importance of communities and why people choose to live where they do. Any interest in forced consolidation, whenever and by whomever that decision might be made, must seek an appropriate balance between community quality of life and fiscal efficiency.

Tell Your Story



To: _____

From: _____

Small & Rural School Districts

in

Washington State

are **Successful,**

are **Valued by and Contribute to their Communities,**

and **Should Not Be Forced**

to Consolidate



- Packet example:

Questions?

