

The Rural Education Center

Newsletter



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Jim Kowalkowski, Director

Websites to check out:

National Rural Education Association:

<http://www.nrea.net>

ERIC Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools:

<http://ael.org/eric/>

Be sure to attend the Washington Learns Public Hearings!

For more information visit:

www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov

Thank You To...

The following school districts & organizations that made contributions to help fund the Small & Rural Schools Teacher Retention Study:

- WSSDA
- OSPI
- Valley S.D.
- Waitsburg S.D.
- Rural Ed Center
- SIRS
- Panorama Supt. Assoc.
- Columbia S.D.
- Orient S.D.
- LaCrosse S.D.
- Neal Kirby
- Keller S.D.
- Northport S.D.
- Trout Lake S.D.

REC Updates

The Rural Education Center has been working hard to ensure that the needs of small and rural districts in our state are heard. REC activities over the past school year include:

- Participating in the Washington Learns Adequacy Study Professional Judgment Panel Meetings.
- Coordinating the Executive Director of the Higher Education Coordinating Board visit to a small and rural district to discuss the potential impacts of HEC Board proposed admission changes.
- Presenting relevant and informative break-out session at the Rural AP fall and spring conferences and at the WASA Small School Conference in Yakima.
- Partnering on numerous projects with the WASA Small Schools Committee and the WSSDA Small Schools Tack Force.

Special Thanks To Rep. Don Cox

Many of you are aware that state representative Don Cox, will not be running again for the legislature. Representative Cox was a strong supporter for small and rural schools and he will be missed! Don worked very hard to preserve levy equalization and he consistently communicated with his fellow legislators on the importance of providing support for our small schools. Before serving in the legislature, Don was the director of the Rural Education Center. He has also served as the superintendent in the Colfax School District. We will miss you Don!

Teacher Retention in Rural & Small Districts Underway!

With support from the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP), a research team from the University of Washington is conducting a study regarding the retention and mobility of teachers in small and rural schools in the state of Washington. Analysis from this study will help inform educators and policymakers about the unique needs of our small and rural districts regarding teacher retention.

Be Sure to Attend the WSSDA Annual Conference Special Sessions for Small Schools – Bring your board members!

If you have not done so yet, be sure to register for the WSSDA annual conference to be held in Spokane this November. The REC has assisted the WSSDA Small Schools Task Force in offering several sessions aimed specifically for small school districts. For more information and to register on-line, go to: www.wssda.org.

Washington Learns Public Hearings in September!

The K-12 steering committee will be holding public hearings this month. Be sure to attend so that the voices of small and rural schools are heard. Get the full text of the K-12 subcommittee draft report along with the details regarding the public hearing at: www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov.

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The Rural Education Center is a statewide cooperative of small and rural districts, ESD's, and several key educational organizations committed to achieving the highest quality of learning on behalf of children in our public schools.

The Rural Ed Center Newsletter

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

<http://ruraledcenter.wsu.edu/>

Research Update On Consolidation

*No conclusive research supports school district consolidation. For a summary of consolation studies, see the March 2006 issue of the AASA journal titled:
The School Administrator.*

Please contact Jim Kowalkowski at the REC if you would like a copy of this article.



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Small Schools Practitioners' Workshop a Success!

The Rural Ed Center, WSU, and OSPI joined forces again this summer to offer another Small Schools Practitioners' Workshop. Staff from school districts were given time and support to work on their respective School Improvement Plans and other projects. Districts participating in the June 19-21 workshop were **Touchet, Easton, Castle Rock, Skykomish, and Trout Lake**. Special thanks to Barbara Quick, Title V Program Supervisor at OSPI, and Gayle Pauley, Title 1 Program Supervisor at OSPI for their work on securing funding to assist with the costs of sponsoring this workshop. The feedback from the participating districts was very positive.

Plans Underway for June, 2007 Small School Practitioners' Workshop

The REC is working with OSPI to continue offering practitioners workshop for small and rural districts. **Tentative** dates for the June 2007 workshop are June 18, 19, & 20. This workshop will be held in Vancouver, WA at the Homewood Suites and offers a relaxing and inviting environment for school teams from small and rural district to work on specific projects. Please stay tuned for more updates. If you would like more information, please contact Jim Kowalkowski at 509-843-3393 or jkowalkowski@psd.wednet.edu.

Re-establishing "RenGrants": The Journey Continues

The Rural Education Center will once again be working hard to support legislation to re-establish the Small Repair Grant program. The Washington Association of Maintenance and Operations Administrators (WAMOA), OSPI, and the REC plan to help re-introduce a bill to create an on-going program to help districts pay for nonrecurring cost associated with urgent facilities repair and renovation.

During the last legislative session, efforts to add additional dollars to the Small Repair Grant program were unsuccessful, despite the fact that over 100 school districts submitted applications. **A total of \$9,238,284 of grant requests was left unfunded!** It's not too early to contact your legislators and ask them to help re-establish and provide funding for this important program. Stay tuned for more information on this important topic and be sure to attend the small repair grant program breakout session during the WSSDA annual conference this November.

Alert: Possible Changes to K-8 Endorsement?

The Professional Educators Standards Board is considering making some significant changes to the current K-8 endorsement. The PESB is looking at three possible options:

1. Beef up the content of the K-8 endorsement so that holder could pass one or more of the Praxis content area(s).
2. Option #1 plus offer a K-6 endorsement for those preservice candidates not intending to teach middle grades.
3. Change the current K-8 endorsement to K-6, requiring that middle grade teachers earn either a middle level math/Science or Middle Level Humanities endorsement.

The REC director, several small school Superintendents, and a K-8 endorsed teacher from a small school attended a PESB sub-committee meeting in Pasco earlier this spring to give input and reactions to each of these proposed changes. Several REC members had also given input via an REC list-serve survey and these comments were also shared with the sub-committee. The most consistent theme from the small and rural school administrators was "please don't take away our flexibility".

Please send your input on this important topic to:

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