



Jim Kowalkowski, Director



Websites to check out:

National Rural Education Association
<http://www.nrea.net>

ERIC Clearinghouse Resources on Rural Education and Small Schools
<http://www.ael.org/eric>

The Rural School and Community Trust
<http://www.ruraledu.org/>

REC Updates

The Rural Education Center is working hard to help serve the needs of small and rural schools across our state. Some recent activities include:

- Sponsoring and promoting legislation to establish a state-level school repair program similar to the one-time federal emergency School Repair and Renovation (“Ren Grant”) program. Testimony was recently given on House Bill 3110 to the House Education Committee. We will continue to promote the need to provide funding for small and rural districts to address urgent health and safety concerns.

- Planning for a June *Small Schools Practitioners' Workshop* (see the back of this newsletter for more info).

- Representing the unique needs of small and rural school during a recent meeting at OSPI with Department of Ed concerning the NCLB “Highly Qualified” teacher requirements.

Please do not hesitate to call the REC anytime to assist with your needs. We are here to serve you!

Special Thanks to Barbara Diment

Barbara Diment is the Title V Consolidated Federal Programs Supervisor at OSPI. She has helped the Rural Education Center with several projects. She worked very hard to secure funding to sponsor the Small Schools Practitioners’ Workshops that were held this past August and September. She is also working on getting funding to help upgrade the REC website. In addition, Barbara is helping sponsor the service learning symposiums (see back of this newsletter). She is a strong advocate for small and rural schools and her efforts are very much appreciated! Thank you Barbara!

2004 WASA Small Schools Conference
March 15 & 16, 2004
Red Lion Gateway Hotel
Yakima, WA
Visit www.wasa-oly.org for registration materials.

NCLB, “High Quality Teachers” & Small Schools

OSPI will continue to give districts guidance and direction on the No Child Left Behind teacher qualifications requirements and paraeducator requirements. Superintendents and principals need to be sure to become familiar with OSPI Memorandum No. 81-03 which clarifies the NCLB teacher qualifications, provides a toolkit for identifying “highly qualified” teachers, and gives the Title 1 requirements of “Parents Right-to-Know” related to teacher qualifications. Washington’s definition of “HOUSSE” (High Objective Uniform State Standard of Evaluation) is included in the bulletin along with some very helpful flow-charts. On January 30, the US Department of Education Teacher Assistance Corps met with OSPI staff and with people representing several other key stakeholders, including the Rural Education Center. Keep your eyes peeled for more specific information from OSPI that will be sent to districts soon regarding further clarification of the “highly qualified” requirements. If you have specific questions on this topic, contact Mary Jo Johnson, Title II Director at OSPI by phone at 360-725-6340 or via e-mail at maryjo@ospi.wednet.edu.

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The Rural Ed Center Newsletter

Contact Us at:

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We're on the Web!

See us at:

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

Note: We are still working on upgrading this website. Stay tuned for updates and developments.

For info. on how to join the Rural Ed Center, contact:

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Plans Underway for June 2004 Practitioners' Workshop

The Rural Ed Center, WSU, and OSPI joined forces last year to offer two very successful Small Schools Practitioners' Workshops in August and September. Plans are underway for another practitioners' workshop for small school districts to be offered in June of this year. The tentative dates are June 20, 21, and 22. We are hoping to secure funding for 10 to 15 district teams (5 people from each school district) to be able to get away to a retreat-type setting to work on goals and projects specific to each district. This type of format worked very well last year and district teams were able to accomplish a great deal of work. ESD and OSPI will be attending to offer support and assistance. The location will most likely be in Vancouver, WA. Most of the costs of this workshop will be funded by a grant that Barbara Diment from OSPI is working on. Stay tuned for more information later this spring and be sure to mark your calendars now!

Service-Learning Symposium for Small Schools

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction's Title V and Learn and Serve Department invite you to participate in the Service-Learning Symposium for Small Schools. This one-day workshop will provide information on service-learning as a teaching and learning strategy, and will address specific issues for small school on this topic. As part of attending this symposium, school districts will be offered resources and materials to start service-learning projects and one-time mini-grants of \$500 will be given out to randomly selected districts to use towards implementing a service-learning project. This workshop is for small districts (2,000 students or less) will take place on the eastside of the state on Friday, March 12, 2004 from 9 a.m. - 4 p.m. and on the westside of the state on Monday, March 15, 2004. There is no cost to attend and a lite breakfast and a great lunch will be provided. For more information and to RSVP, contact Nasue Mishada, Learn and Serve Program Specialist at (360) 725-6104 or nishida@ospi.wednet.edu.

Register Today!

Small Rural School Achievement Program Update

This article was written by Pris Richardson, Director of Consolidated Federal Programs/Rural Education at OSPI.

SOMETHING TO REMEMBER ABOUT YOUR REAP-FLEX AND SMALL RURAL SCHOOLS ACHIEVEMENT PROGRAM (SRSAP) GRANTS

Just in case you haven't been spending your evenings and weekends entertaining yourselves by reading the REAP Guidance document provided by the U.S. Department of Education last June, I wanted to bring a couple of important sections to your attention.

Sections II-E-3 and II-E-4 address the consequences districts will face if they don't meet the state's definition of AYP for three years. Basically, they say that all the allocations combined in your REAP-Flex and all the funds received in your SRSAP will have to be used for the Title I School Improvement activities authorized in Section 1116 if your district falls short of making AYP three years in a row. This seems to be one of the more sensible bits of guidance we've received on the implementation of the various parts of No Child Left Behind (NCLB). While districts will not be penalized by losing any funding, the REAP-flex and SRSAP funding will have to be directed to activities that are deemed most likely to raise student achievement scores.

For those of you who are sorting through the Title I implications of missing the AYP target as a district with $N < 30$, this guidance about REAP funds does add a new wrinkle. It means that although you won't be an official Title I School Improvement school, and under the law won't be required to use your Title I funds for Section 1116 activities, you will be using your SRSAP and REAP-Flex (if you choose to flex) funds that way. Since your SRSAP grants are usually much larger than your Title I allocations, the implications for your district, should you not make AYP for three years, will be significant.

Your Rural Education team and your Title I team at OSPI are working very closely to try to minimize confusion or mixed messages to you as we all work to implement the requirements and opportunities in NCLB at the state, district, and school levels. We welcome your suggestions as to how we can best serve you.

Note: Pris can be contacted at OSPI at (360)725-6225 or by email at prichardson@ospi.wednet.edu.

Note: If you are planning on attending the WASA Small Schools Conference in Yakima on March 15 & 16, please be sure to attend the Rural Ed Center meeting that will take place during the conference. The date, time, and location will be printed in the program. All are invited—your input is needed, please attend!