

NWRES D presents annual report to Banks, Vernonia school boards

The annual report from the Northwest Regional Education Service District (NWRES D) was presented to both the Banks and Vernonia School Districts at their November meetings. Dr. Bud Moore, NWRES D Deputy Superintendent and Sally Bunnell, Zone Three Director, made the presentation in Banks, November 18. In Vernonia, Dr. Todd Herberg, NWRES D Superintendent, made the presentation accompanied by Zone 5 Director Del Fennell, November 21.

Financial overview

Both presentations gave an overview of the NWRES D annual report previously sent to school board members. Like local school districts, Education

Service Districts (ESDs) receive the majority of their funding from the state school fund. Recent legislation requires that 90 percent of all money received must be spent on student-related services in, or by, local school districts. NWRES D serves 20 school districts in Washington, Columbia, Clatsop and Tillamook Counties and currently has the largest student enrollment of any ESD in the state. The 2000-2001 legislature passed a four-year equalization plan for ESD funding throughout the state, similar to school district equalization. Prior to that legislation, large metropolitan ESDs, such as Multnomah, received far more money per student than other ESD's.

The financial overview further illustrates the similarities of ESD funding and school district funding across the state. Both are based on Average Daily Membership (weighted) or ADMw, and both have had reductions in the amounts originally budgeted from the state school fund.

NWRES D has an ADMw of 107,736 and is currently budgeted to receive \$19,909,930 from the State School Fund, approximately \$1.5 million less than the \$21.5 million allocated by the legislature in June 2001. NWRES D can expect a further reduction of \$800,000 if the January 28 income tax measure fails.

Urge school boards to meet with legislators

Moore and Herberg urged school board members to attend the legislative dinner sponsored by NWRES D on Dec. 2. Members of both houses of the state legislature will have an opportunity to engage in discussion with local school board members about the impact of their decisions on local school districts.

In an interview with *The INDEPENDENT*, Herberg said that the NWRES D contains the districts of eight state senators (over 25 percent of the legislative body) and that he and others have been working diligently with legislators to develop bipartisan, realistic solutions to Oregon's school funding crisis. Herberg hoped to reach consensus with the legislators prior to the December 2 dinner meeting with school board members. According to Her-

berg, the agreement will include a solution for the short-term funding crisis as well as a practical long-term solution to provide stable funding for Oregon's schools. In addition, Herberg said, he is also working to reach a similar agreement with Multnomah and other metropolitan ESDs. Herberg expressed hope that superintendents, school board members and legislators could work effectively as a team during the upcoming legislative session to resolve the current crisis.

NWRES D includes 20 school districts

Superintendents from the 20 school districts within NWRES D meet annually to agree on how ESD funding should be spent. The ESD is restricted by law to 10 percent of the total funds for internal operations. According to Moore, 27 percent (of the 90 percent remaining) is retained by the ESD to provide "core services" that local districts agree can best be provided at, or from, a central location. The remaining ESD funds are delivered directly to local school districts. The annual report summarizes the four areas of service provided by the ESD - Administrative and Board Services, Special Student Services, Instruction and School Improvement Services and Technology and Support Services.

Report includes how districts use services

The annual report also summarizes how each school district spent their allocation. In both Banks and Vernonia, the

vast majority of the ESD allocation is used to provide special Student Services. These include early intervention/early childhood special education, school age special education and low incidence regional services (LIRS). In the Banks school district 83 percent of total funds were spent in areas of special student services. In Vernonia, 73 percent was spent on special student services. The remainder, 17 percent in Banks and 27 percent in Vernonia, was spent on services that benefit all students in the areas of instructional and school improvement and technology and support services. According to the report, NWRES D will advocate for improved funding for early intervention and adequate funding for LIRS for all children in the district.

Herberg said that NWRES D priorities for 2002-2003 include four major areas: Continued delivery of high-quality direct services to special education students, especially for high need students who cannot be served by their local school districts; addressing the needs of students who are English Language Learners (ELL); helping provide access to technology for every student in the area; providing local districts with increased student services in the areas of student assessment, curriculum alignment and staff training for the purpose of improving student achievement.

Additional information, including the complete annual report, is available on NWRES D website: www.nwresd.k12.or.us

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