



Tukwila School District

Testimony before the Joint Task on Basic Education Finance Dec 8, 2008

About Us:

- 2800 students
- 1 high school, 1 middle school, 3 elementary schools
- 78% free and reduced lunch students (schools range from 60% to 90%)
- 33% ELL (English Language Learners)
- 60 + different home languages
- 60% of students from families where English is not the home language
- Top 7 home languages
 - English – 40%
 - Spanish – 21%
 - Somali – 8%
 - Vietnamese – 5%
 - Bosnian – 3%
 - Russian – 3%
 - Turkish – 2%

Our test scores:

- Our absolute WASL scores are at or near the bottom of districts in the Puget Sound Area
- One of our elementary schools won the 2008 School of Distinction award for the improvement in WASL scores over the last 6 years.
- Our elementary school with the highest free and reduced lunch and ELL percentage increased the WASL 3rd grade math scores by 28.3 percentage points and reading scores by 24.1 percentage points in 2008.

Why is equity in funding important?

In terms of WASL success our students have 2 strikes against them: most come from low income families and are in the process of learning English. We cannot change what the students bring to school, but we can provide them opportunities to allow them to succeed. Research shows that they can succeed with sufficient quality educational time. This includes extended day, extended year, summer school, before and after school programs and effective intervention strategies. All these require more quality instructional time. Without these opportunities many of our students will have the third strike and remain in the cycle of poverty.

What does equity look like in an education funding model?

- More per student funding for free and reduced lunch students.
- More per student funding based on a high percentage of free and reduced lunch students at a school.
- More per student funding for ELL students
- More per student funding based on a high percentage of ELL students at a school, the average level on the WLPT (Washington Language Proficiency Test) and the number of different languages.
- More per student funding for technology for free and reduced lunch students

Why more for technology?

- Upper and middle income students get it at home, lower income students do not get equal access at home..
- Technology fluency is required to get the jobs that we want for our students.
- Technology is a huge motivator for our students.
- Technology can increase teacher efficiency.
- Technology allows us to individualize learning for our wide diversity of learners

Local Control

We have an unusual mix of students and need to be able to use the expertise and knowledge of our staff to create a learning environment that will allow our students to excel.