

- ORCAS ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT

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- WHY ARE WE HERE:

Gov. Gregoire came to visit. Ambushed by every school board member about the most recent budget. She didn't know there was a problem. Jeff Morris and Dave Quall didn't know there was a problem. There was a problem. A \$600,000 problem. And we weren't alone. San Juan Island was facing a \$825,000 problem. While those shortfalls don't seem large in terms of the amounts you deal with as a legislature – these numbers are HUGE to a small district like Orcas.

When you look at the scope of basic education it is hard for you to remember that all districts are not the size of the Seattle, Spokane or Olympia school districts. Most districts in Washington are like the Orcas School district: small. We are here as the face of a rural school district. We are a shining example of how a small district can succeed. We are also an example of how inadequate funding can absolutely undermine the best in public education.

- WHAT IS THE ORCAS ISLAND SCHOOL DISTRICT?
(to learn more – go to www.orcasislandschools.org.) Ms. Kline will discuss:

How many schools?

What is enrollment?

How are we performing? (Greatschools.net, School of Distinction, WASL scores, Principal of the Year)

- WHAT HAPPENED LAST YEAR?

1. State COLA & Enrollment Conditions:
(shortfall: \$161,000)
2. Salary Enhancement (District):
(shortfall: \$133,000)
3. District Financial Conditions
ie: projected loss of 2007-2008 donations:
(shortfall: \$200,000)

- 4. Normal Course of Business
 ex: fuel increase, restore
 level of 1% for unallocated
 resource - contingency,
 adjusted M&O supplies to more
 likely levels, insurance, &
 Running Start:
 (shortfall: \$101,000)

TOTAL SHORTFALL FOR 08-09: \$594,000

- HOW COULD WE MAKE UP THE SHORTFALL?
 NERC reductions and RIF's. With the RIFs, this curriculum would be
 eliminated:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- High School English class -- Middle School Language Arts -- Physics -- Digital Media -- AP US History -- 8th grade Science -- Elementary/MS/HS math
specialist -- CTE Woodworking -- AP Calculus -- HS Spanish | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -- CTE Career Choices -- A primary teacher (thus
increasing class size in K-6) -- Elementary music -- High School Music Technology -- Middle school guitar -- Middle school Choir/theater -- CTE Foods (although not
technically a RIF, after this teacher
retired, we could not
replace her) |
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- HOW *DID* WE MAKE UP THE SHORTFALL?

1. Fundraising
2. More significant NERC reductions
3. Contribute less to growing our reserve fund
4. Reduce Administration by 1.0 FTE
5. Cut tech support
6. Cut Library
7. Increase food costs

WE NOW ARE AT A PLACE WE CANNOT CUT ANY FURTHER WITHOUT CUTTING PROGRAMMING. Our staff and programming is what has made us successful. Next time we face a shortfall, we will have to start cutting staff. That means an excellent curriculum will be severely damaged.

- WE CANNOT BE FORCED INTO MEDIOCRITY
 - WHAT ARE SOLUTIONS: For us – for other rural schools.
1. Redefine our funding status from “small school” to “remote and necessary.” While we do not come close to the enrollment threshold for remote and necessary funding, we are a de facto remote and necessary school. This is something that should be considered for ALL island districts.
 2. Orcas Island has a generous and supportive electorate. While we do not want to relieve the legislature of its duty to amply fund public education, we are also looking at our own self-interest. To that end, we ask that the Legislature start allowing higher levy lids (a lid lift as it were) on districts such as ours that choose to pursue that avenue of local funding.
 3. Restructure funding for administrators. Right now the funding formula for administrators is based on what that administrator was paid in 1978. We receive less than half of what we are paying our administrators.
 4. Teacher relocation support for small school districts in “land rich” communities. Orcas Island will be facing some retirements within its certified staff over the few years. Attracting young teachers will be difficult as Orcas is an expensive place to live. Some sort of relocation subsidy would help us bring dynamic, bright, new teachers to the island.
 5. As enrollment continues to drop, it would be helpful to average enrollment over a period of time when creating a budget. This year, for example, we budgeted for fewer students and, therefore, a drop of \$100,000 in state revenue. If we were to average our enrollment over (i.e.) a three year period it would allow us to plan for declining enrollment instead of reacting to it in such draconian methods. This would help ALL rural/small districts
 6. Relief from ferry tickets and some additional subsidy for fuel costs. Again, as an island, we are spending more dollars on travel, way beyond what other similar sized districts are spending. Suspension of ferry fees would put \$10000 in our general fund and pay, for example, for our woodworking teacher.
 7. Recognize the impact of Special Education on small, isolated districts. Enhanced funding?
- WRAP UP.