

The Rural Education Center

Newsletter



Fall
Issue
2008-09

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/>

Mark Your Calendars!

The WASA Annual Small Schools Conference will be held at the Yakima Convention Center

March 1-3, 2009

Interested in Joining the Rural Education Center?

Contact: Lonnie Purcell at Educational Service District 101

Phone: 509-789-3508
E-mail: lpurcell@esd101.net



REC Updates

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

- The director is a member of the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force (see related article in this newsletter)
 - Networking at numerous state conferences and meetings
 - Testifying at several State Board of Education Meetings
 - Attending a state affiliate meeting this summer in Ohio sponsored by the National Rural Education Association
 - Working closely with OSPI regarding skills center satellite feasibility studies
 - Responding to various REC member district superintendent requests for information and assistance
 - Working closely with the WASA Small Schools Committee and the WSSDA Small Schools Task Force on several key projects
- Please share copies of this newsletter with fellow administrators and school board members. Please do not hesitate to contact the Rural Ed. Center if we can be of any assistance to you.

From the Director:

Update: Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance

There have been 15 meetings of this task force since September, 2007 and during our recent meetings on September 15 & 16, I learned that we may have as many as 13 more meetings this fall and early winter! Our work is due to be completed by this December.

The Task Force is directed to propose a new definition of basic education and to develop alternative funding structures. I am finding that this is a daunting task. Our current funding system is complicated and outdated.

The Task Force, as least so far, has **not** appeared to be moving in a direction that would cut funding to small and/or rural school districts. I have been very vocal about how important our small and/or rural districts are and how they and all districts, regardless of size, need more funding. I encourage each of you to follow the work of the task force. For the most up-to date information, go to:

www.leg.wa.gov/Joint/Committees/BEF/
This site contains all the reports issued so far by the Washington State Institute for Public Policy as well as detailed information regarding each meeting that has been held.

Be Sure to Attend the WSSDA Annual Conference –Nov. 20-22

Special Sessions for Small Schools – Bring your board members!

See the back of his newsletter for more info and...

Go to: <http://wssda.org>

State Board of Education Update

There are some significant projects that the State Board is considering taking action on. Be sure to pay close attention to the work of the "Meaningful High School Diploma Committee" (CORE 24). For specifics, go to: <http://www.sbe.wa.gov/>

Pupil Transportation Funding Alert!

A K-12 advisory committee is considering three new funding models. Go to the Office of Financial Management website: www.ofm.wa.gov/k12transpo/ for specific information.

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

The Rural Ed Center Newsletter

We're on the Web!

See us at:

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



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Small Schools Practitioners' Workshop a Success!

The Rural Ed Center, WSU, and OSPI joined forces again in June of 2008 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. Special thanks to Barbara Quick, Title V Program Supervisor at OSPI, and Gayle Pauley, Title I 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, 2009 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 2009 workshop are **June 24, 25, & 26**. 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 509-725-1481 or jimkowalkowski@davenport.wednet.edu.

WSSDA Annual Conference –Nov. 20-22 Spokane, WA Special Sessions for Small Districts

Thursday, Nov. 20:

- *Non-High Districts—Preserving Quality Education
- *Full Funding Coalition Proposal through the Small School Lens
- *Strategies to Assist Small Districts in Finding Qualified Math & Science Teachers
- *Impact of CORE 24 in Small Districts

Friday, Nov. 21:

- *Small Schools Cooperative
- *Career & Technical Education: Academic Integration in High Demand Fields

Scholarships for board members and administrators from districts that have not attended the annual conference in the past two years are available. Go to: www.wssda.org and search the "Foundation" section for more information.

Small Repair Grants –The Journey Continues!!!

Some of our small and rural school districts were fortunate to have received a Small Repair Grant last school year. However, many districts did not receive grants and are waiting for the program to be continued.

OSPI is requesting that the Legislature fund \$5 million in the 2009-11 Biennium for the Small Repair Grant Program. For the 2007-09 biennium, OSPI received 125 applications requesting more than \$10 million in urgent repairs at school faculties. While some of these districts did receive assistance, only \$4 million was made available and 47 projects were funded.

Encourage your local legislators to continue to fund this valuable grant program. For more information, go to:

<http://www.k12.wa.us/SchFacilities/SmallRepairProgram.aspx>

ALERT: The Washington State Board of Health is considering adoption of its school environmental health and safety rule. **This could result in more unfunded mandates**—go to www.sboh.wa.gov/ for current information.