

# Superintendents Advocating for and Valuing Education



December 14, 2011

Dear Washington State Senators and Representatives in the Puget Sound ESD Region:

We are writing as a coalition of superintendents in the Puget Sound Educational Service District region, which serves nearly 400,000 public school students in 35 school districts in King and Pierce counties plus Bainbridge Island.

Out of our responsibility to the students, staff, and communities we serve, we are writing to offer our perspective regarding the difficult budget decisions you must make in developing the 2012 supplemental budget. School Districts have been forced to make significant budget cuts in each of the last few years, and any additional reductions will seriously impact our schools and the children we serve. We ask you to consider the following priorities:

- 1. Implement new revenue options to prevent further cuts to education.**
  - A 2010 Superior Court ruling found that the legislature was not meeting its constitutional duty to fully fund public education even before the recent K-12 reductions were imposed. We therefore urge the legislature to find new sources of revenue, rather than further eroding school funding.
- 2. If additional K-12 cuts are necessary, they should be made as equitably as possible.**
  - There should be no cuts or changes to the current LEA funding formula.
  - There should be no cuts to small school funding formulas or other cuts that would have a negative impact on some districts and not others.
- 3. If additional K-12 cuts are necessary, mid-year and/or retroactive reductions should not be implemented.**
  - RCW 28A.405 requires school districts to annually contract with certificated staff. This requirement leaves school districts with very limited ability to make mid-year adjustments to their workforce, which represents about 85% of most district budgets.
  - Due to previous budget reductions, many districts have insufficient fund balance to absorb such cuts.
  - We appreciate the fact that Governor Gregoire's proposed 2012 Supplemental Budget did not contain mid-year cuts to schools, and ask the legislature to also avoid mid-year budget reductions.
- 4. The Governor's proposed budget includes shortening the school year, which we believe will be harmful to student learning. If the legislature chooses to cut days, there must be legislation that:**
  - Protects school districts from having to pay for the days (i.e. suspend negotiated agreements that specify 180 days in the contract);
  - Specifies a corresponding reduction in the 1,000 hour contact time requirement;
  - Includes a sunset provision that would restore the lost days in the 2013-14 Biennium or earlier if funding is available.
- 5. New initiatives and mandates should be suspended until K-12 funding is fully restored.**
  - The state should not continue demanding more of our schools while offering less support.

Respectfully,  
Superintendents representing the following school districts:



**School District Superintendents in King and Pierce Counties and Bainbridge Island**

Dr. Monte L Bridges,	Puget Sound Educational Service District
Mr. Kip Herren,	Auburn School District
Ms. Faith Chapel,	Bainbridge Island School District
Dr. Amalia Cudeiro,	Bellevue School District
Mr. Tom Seigel,	Bethel School District
Mr. Scott Hubbard,	Carbonado School District
Ms. Debbie LeBeau,	Clover Park School District
Dr. Judy Neumeier-Martinson,	Dieringer School District
Mr. Mike Nelson,	Enumclaw School District
Mr. Robert Neu,	Federal Way School District
Dr. Steve McCammon,	Fife School District
Dr. Frank Hewins,	Franklin Pierce School District
Mr. Alan Spicciati,	Highline School District
Dr. Steve Rasmussen,	Issaquah School District
Dr. Edward Lee Vargas,	Kent School District
Dr. Chip Kimball,	Lake Washington School District
Dr. Gary Plano,	Mercer Island School District
Dr. Larry Francois,	Northshore School District
Ms. Michelle Curry,	Orting School District
Mr. Terry Bouck,	Peninsula School District
Dr. Tony Apostle,	Puyallup School District
Dr. Mary Alice Heuschel,	Renton School District
Mr. Conrad Robertson,	Riverview School District
Dr. Susan Enfield,	Seattle School District
Ms. Susanne Walker,	Shoreline School District
Mr. Jeffery Long,	Skykomish School District
Mr. Joel Aune,	Snoqualmie Valley School District
Mr. Bill Fritz,	Steilacoom Historical School District
Mr. Craig Spencer,	Sumner School District
Dr. Art Jarvis,	Tacoma School District
Mr. Mike Maryanski,	Tahoma School District
Ms. Ethelda Burke,	Tukwila School District
Ms. Patti Banks,	University Place School District
Mr. Michael Soltman,	Vashon Island School District
Mr. Tom Lockyer,	White River School District