



Testimony before the House Committee on Revenue
February 17, 2011

State School Transportation Funding Formula

Mister and Madame Chairs and members of the committee, for the record I am State Representative Betty Komp. I represent House District 22, which includes the cities of Woodburn, Gervais and Brooks as well as NE Salem.

As you may know, I've been working on Oregon's school funding formula since I first came to the legislature in 2005. The formula that some folks from Legislative Revenue and the Department of Education are here to share with you today is one of the most complex in the nation. The reason for this is that 20 years ago, legislative leaders worked hard to ensure equity for all students in our state, both urban and rural. That work gave us the formula you see today.

However, it is my belief that Oregon's education needs have changed dramatically since then. One of the most fundamental shifts behind this change was the passage of the federal No Child Left Behind Act, which adjusted many of the federal requirements placed on our nation's schools. This not only altered the way we delivered education to our kids, but how we funded it as well.

I am here today to share one example of how the State School Fund is currently allocated. I submit to the committee a chart depicting the impacts of the State School Fund formula with the additional requirements of the school transportation formula. In this case, we have two formulas that impact our general fund allocations to schools. The first column, titled "ADM", represents the actual enrollment of each school district, while the second column, titled "ADMw", represents the effects of the weighted formula that gives many school districts more funds than others. Some of the discrepancies in here between school districts is interesting, and begs the questions as to prudent of us as the leaders of our State to reevaluate the true effectiveness of the current funding formula.

I know this will be challenging, but our students, teachers, and citizens deserve true understanding of where our dollars are going before we can define possible needed efficiencies and structural changes to our state in this current budget climate. I'm going to rely on Mr. Reeder's expert understanding to assist in answering your questions. I respectfully request that you will support the concept of working with key members in the building to appoint a task force to review the outcomes of our current system and evaluate if no changes are needed or if they reached recommendations for an equitable change.