

From the desk of
Rep. Dallas Heard



Roseburg Public Schools

March 30, 2015

Honorable Representative Heard

As you know, the Oregon House is scheduled to vote tomorrow on HB 5017 to fund schools at \$7.255 billion for the upcoming biennium. Roseburg Public Schools is a district with declining enrollment and while this funding level represents an increase in the overall funding from the 2013-15 biennium, it does not adequately cover the real costs facing our district.

Over the past three biennia we have deferred major maintenance projects, curriculum adoptions and improving classroom technology for our students. We did so each year with the hope that when the economy improved, we would be able to start to catch up on these deferred expenses as well as add back staff to meet the needs of our students. With receiving 51% of the biennium resources in this academic year we were able to add back counselors at both middle schools to reduce our counseling ratio at those buildings from 1:700 to 1:350, purchase mobile carts of computers for each school and purchase materials to replace our 15 year old math curriculum at the middle school.

We will be implementing all day kindergarten this fall. The \$7.255 billion funding level does not provide enough resources for us to do so without taking resources away from students in other grade levels. We will be forced to make hard decisions about the deferred major maintenance projects we can no longer defer and may have to borrow funds to do them, thus further increasing their cost.

Another component of HB 5017 is changing the funding structure for the biennium from a 49%/51% split to 50%/50% split. This change reduces the base for the 2017-19 biennium because it lowers the base in the second year of the biennium. Our costs are not flat from year to year. A 50%/50% split will require us to make even deeper cuts in the second year.

Roseburg Public Schools needs at least \$7.5 billion for this biennium to add full-day kindergarten and remain stable with current programs and class sizes.

I ask you to vote NO on the budget and hold out for a plan that guarantees at least \$7.5 billion for schools is fully articulated and put forward for approval with a plan that maintains the 49%/51% split between the two years of the biennium and reflects reasonable estimates of collections and growth.

Thank you for your time, attention, caring and willingness to take a stand for the children of Roseburg. I know I can count on you to support a reasonable path that protects our students and our schools and helps us move forward.

Sincerely,

Larry Parsons, PhD.
Roseburg Public Schools Superintendent

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it takes!**

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