



LANE EDUCATION SERVICE DISTRICT

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EQUITY COMMITMENT LEADERSHIP COLLABORATION INTEGRITY

April 11, 2019

Co-Chairs Representative Smith-Warner, Senator Roblan and members of the Joint Committee on Student Success;

Thank you very much for doing what is right for Oregon students.

As I have worked in Coquille, Sutherlin and Pleasant Hill, I am very familiar with challenges faced by small districts. Assisting smaller districts was one of the reasons I applied for my current job as Superintendent of Lane ESD. In our region, we have sixteen school districts. Twelve of them have fewer than 2,000 students; five have fewer than 500 students. In some of these districts, as is the case throughout much of rural Oregon, there is extreme poverty. You met some of these students in person while on your tour this past year.

Small districts don't have School Improvement Departments, they cannot hire full time School Psychologists or Student Behavior Specialists. This is where ESDs help. ESDs will not only assist small districts in writing their School Improvement Fund/District Improvement Account plans, they will help them implement it.

ESDs help create efficiencies. For example, a district hoping to provide social-emotional supports for students may hire School Psychologists or Behavior Specialists. A small district may not need a full-time Specialist, they may only need someone quarter time. A nearby district may want a quarter-time person. A slightly larger district may want a half-time person. ESDs can hire these people and coordinate their schedules.

One of the investment opportunities is for increased learning time—more instructional hours/days. ESDs have personnel working in districts and we will need to expand their time. ESDs need to match district calendars and it will take money to do this.

It is important to realize the money that goes to ESDs is not controlled by the ESD. It is only spent on agreement from our component school districts. Ninety percent of the funds have to be spent on district services and where it is spent is determined by a very democratic process.

Including ESDs in the Student Success Act ensures equity for middle and small districts and does so with a strong democratic, district-centered focus. ESDs help create the efficiencies to ensure investment dollars move the dial for all Oregon students, whether they are in big, middle or small districts.

Thank you for your hard work on this. Please let us know how we can help you get this done.

Sincerely,

Tony Scurto
Superintendent