

Robert Waltenburg - Superintendent

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March 29, 2021

Senator Lew Frederick, Co-Chair  
Representative Susan McLain, Co-Chair  
Joint Committee on Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
Oregon State Legislature

RE: Support for Increase in Funding

Senator Frederick, Representative McLain, and Members of the Committee:

HB 3427 (2019) established the foundation and operational guidance for Oregon's Student Success Act including funding and support for improved educational outcomes for students across the state. As part of this Legislation, Oregon's education service districts (ESDs) were identified as playing a critical role in the implementation of the programs proposed by the Act. Because of the critical nature of ESD work in the SIA world, the legislation mandated a .25 FTE in each ESD be assigned to the task. An appropriation of \$24 million was budgeted for grants from the Statewide Education Initiatives Account to ESDs to support component school districts in the development and implementation of their 2020-21 plans. This appropriation was later reduced to \$20 million in August of 2020. To put this in perspective, Grant County ESD's portion based on ADMw of this funding originally amounted to approximately \$25,000.00 per year and was later reduced to around \$21,000.00. This equates to less than a .25 FTE, meaning yet another unfunded mandate for our ESD. On behalf of Grant County ESD and our five remote, frontier school districts, we are asking that this amount be restored to \$42 million for the 2021-23 biennium. This amount represents the original service level appropriation for the full two-year period of the upcoming biennium.

The support for component school districts in our region has focused on the following activities:

- Provided assistance with writing, revising, and submitting plans and submitting reports;
- Dedicated a person to act as liaison between ODE & districts to keep districts apprised of current SIA information and processes;
- Provided funding in first year of the biennium to assist with collecting & analyzing student achievement/SIA measurement data, including purchase of data collection tools;
- Assisted with locating resources, technical expertise and professional development of district SIA plans;
- During COVID, re-allocated staff to serve as the Reopening Advisor, as well as assisted districts with writing Blueprints, coordinated communication and meeting with health officials.

We urge your consideration of \$42 million for the 2021-23 biennium from the Statewide Initiatives Account for ESDs to continue and further develop this work in our region with our five frontier school districts and their approximately 800 students. While this number may seem inconsequential and insignificant in the grand scheme of 600,000-plus students in Oregon, these 800 kids mean the world to us!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Robert Waltenburg". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long, sweeping tail on the final letter.

Robert Waltenburg, Superintendent  
Grant County ESD