

Community Meetings Scheduled

2008-09 Operating Budget - A Challenge Ahead

The San Juan Island School District is facing a very challenging budget development process for the 2008-09 school year. Estimates by the Washington Association of School Administrators are that school districts in the State of Washington face a \$100 million shortfall this year due to underfunded salary increases by the legislature and other program reductions passed during the 2008 session. Dr. Jerry Jenkins, our ESD 189 Superintendent estimates that the NWESD regions's thirty-five school districts face more than a \$28 million dollar shortfall related to underfunded raises.

Dr. Bill Keim, ESD 113 Superintendent in Olympia, states in a recent article that, "Based on data available through the National Center for Education Statistics, in 1993 Washington ranked 11th in it's adjusted per student expenditure. In 2005, according to data presented in the 2008 Quality Counts report, Washington State had slid to a ranking of 44th with a total per student expenditure of \$7,432. Moving Washington back into the 11th ranked position would require an additional \$2,553 per student or a total of \$2.46 billion dollars." Clearly, the entire state is facing a funding crisis in education that can only be addressed by leadership in our state legislature.

Current estimates are that we will need to reduce our program budget by \$820,000 in order to produce a balanced budget for next year. The San Juan School District funding shortfall is compounded by the State's failure to fully fund raises and basic education programs, declining enrollment, special education costs, and staffing added this year to meet program and operational needs.

It is important that we all have accurate information to inform discussions about how to make these reductions. We invite your participation through attending a series of public meetings commencing Wednesday, April 23rd, 6:30 - 8:00 p.m. in the middle school commons. The purpose of the meeting is to review education funding issues in our state, and to understand the impact on our school district for the 2008-09 school year. A second meeting is scheduled, Thursday, May 1st, 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. to consider specific program reductions. Please plan to attend the community meetings.

Thank you for your commitment to our schools,

Michael Soltman, Superintendent of Schools
San Juan Island School District