



Legislative Talking Points 16-17 Sweetwater County School District #1

District Budget

- The negative external cost adjustment (ECA) reduction to the District foundation guarantee (block grant) is approximately \$392,647 for the 17-18 school year.
- Examples of 5%, 10%, and 15% reductions to the foundation guarantee would result in the following losses respectively: \$4.08 million; \$8.17 million; and \$12.25 million.
- For certified positions, this would result in a reduction in force with newer staff vacating the job and possibly leaving the State. Likewise, this will present a future recruiting problem and teacher shortage including certification concerns. As with many other Wyoming districts, Sweetwater County School District #1 currently experiences difficulty in recruiting special education certified staff and has so for many years.
- The reduction in foundation funding due to a decrease in average daily membership (ADM) for 17-18: \$678,602. The Legislative model automatically adjusts for these fluctuations through the foundation guarantee and the major maintenance funding formula. In other words, fewer ADMs reduces the allotted funding provided from the State level for building maintenance. The foundation guarantee (block grant) is lowered automatically with decreased enrollment and allows for a 3-year rolling average which allows districts time to adjust.

The following are the effects and suggestions on the various areas within the District should increasing class size pass the Legislature.

Current funding:

K-5 – 16:1
6-12 – 21:1

Proposed class size:

K-3 – 16:1
4-6 – 21:1
7-12 – 24:1

- Preliminary estimate of loss of funding due to class size increases is \$2.7 million. This is approximately 34 certified teaching positions. When changes are made to the block grant model (foundation guarantee) in non-recalibration years, the affect is not limited to additional students in a classroom. The number of core teachers adjusts the funding for elective teachers/specialist teachers and substitute teachers. These unintended consequences are not what is best for our students.

Current funding:

K-5 – 16:1
6-12 – 21:1

Proposed class size:

K-12 – 24:1

- Preliminary estimate of loss of funding due to class size increases is \$7.98 million. This is approximately 100 certified teaching positions.
- Our District recognizes the need for counselors in grades K-6 and school nurses. We currently have a counselor in each school supporting those grade levels. The current funding model does not include counselors in grades K-6 or nurses. This does not support educating students with unique needs, positive

behavior expectations, and school safety efforts and should be part of the essential basket of goods for all students.

- The District has a large subgroup of English Learners (472 students in 15-16). Under proposed legislation, the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) may require student achievement accountability for adequate growth either by individual EL student or by school. The current funding model provides only 1 EL teacher: 100 students. In essence, schools are held accountable for an inadequately funded mandate.
- Any further reduction in funding is compounded with additional legislative cuts and will be devastating to students.
- Curriculum updates could be delayed. Currently, the K-12 English Language Arts curricula are operating with outdated materials purchased 10 years ago. Over the course of the next seven (7) years, the District will need updated curriculum resources to support other content areas as the Wyoming Content and Performance Standards are revised and updated. Teacher materials to support these standards are necessary.

Moving from the Legislative (Block Grant) to the Consultants (Evidence-based, Picus & Odden) Model

- Regional Cost of Living Index - The District supports the regional cost of living adjustment by using comparable wage index methodology and/or updating the Hedonic Wage Index to the most current available Hedonic Wage Index. An updated regional cost adjustment would allow the District to recruit and retain quality certified, classified, and administrative staff.

School Facilities

- Major maintenance funding should be for **all** square footage prior to the existence of the School Facilities Commission. Currently the District has 1,928,944 square feet of education space. Of this amount, 700,557 gross square feet was built prior to the School Facilities Commission. Therefore, the District only receives major maintenance funding for 564,903 square feet which is based on student average daily membership. This doesn't include buildings built during the School Facilities Commission oversight.
- Major maintenance should not use average daily membership to determine funding. Funding should be based solely on approved square footage.
- Major maintenance funding for new buildings is currently phased in over four (4) years, beginning in year three. Funding should start immediately at 100% in order to be compliant with Governor Mead's mandate of asset preservation and the Legislators desire to have districts self-fund capital projects (i.e. roof replacement, boiler replacement, etc.).
- Districts should be allowed to use major maintenance dollars for specialty contracts (i.e. elevator maintenance, fire system inspections, control systems updates, climate controls, parking lot maintenance, etc.). Additional flexibility in the use of Major Maintenance funds must be considered if a reduction to the foundation guarantee is passed.