



Budget & Education Working Group

Group C: Rural, Population, & Culture

May Meeting Summary

Below are notes from comments made by the Budget & Education Working Group members.

Identified Obstacles:

- Teacher Retention:
 - Teachers in small rural school feel isolated.
 - Teacher recruitment & retention difficult. Even if willing to move to a rural community spouse may have job lock in a more urban or suburban area.
 - Housing costs and scarcity in rural areas.
- Reduce administrative burden for small schools: they do not have the staff bandwidth for reporting and data requirements.
- Inflation pressures; building maintenance deferred, do not have a large enough reserve to address emergencies (roof blows off).
- Some rural schools do not have bus or food service, but in those that do the costs have increased a lot.
- Shortage of bus drivers, hard to transport children. May have to put onus on parents.
- Out of district enrollment bigger effect on small schools. Concerned with administrative burden under Hb 203.
- Tax burden: levies are failing but the funding needs to be increased.

Discussed Solutions:

- Revenue Sources:
 - Higher property tax rate for VRBO & AirBnB, 2nd home for out of state owners.
- Tax break for parents to transport children to school.
- Housing: Property tax break for teachers, property tax break for landlords who rent below market rate for teachers.
- Mentor teachers: expand teacher mentorship for teachers, especially in rural areas, across school districts.
- Reimburse students for transporting children to school: tax rebate for mileage.
- AIM is helping with streamlining reports- condensing reports, ability to pull reports from data entered into AIMs.
- With levies failing in low voter turnout elections, moving school board and levies election in line with primary and general election.
- Increase equalization across districts, districts with larger tax base contribute more.
- 4-day school weeks have been successful in many rural schools.