

Bill Dyer
March 9, 2019

I'd like to make a statement regarding the resolution directing our superintendent to prepare for a reduced education plan and reduction in force.

The Aberdeen School District is projected to have a budget shortfall of \$3.5 million dollars for the 2019-2020 school year. This shortfall is primarily due to a changed legislative funding model after a prolonged McCleary court decision. As a result, the new funding model has produced winners and losers. Over a hundred Washington school districts have seen severe cuts, including Aberdeen. Organizations such as WASA (Washington Association of School Administrators) and WSSDA (Washington State School Directors' Association) have asked legislators to fix the funding crisis. To this date there have been no significant changes to help our budget crisis.

To be sure, school financing is complicated, with funding coming from Local, State, and Federal dollars often with rules and regulations stipulating their use. To effectively communicate McCleary changes the district has held open budget meetings and organized a Budget Advisory Committee with membership from the community, teachers, administrators, and para-educators. Superintendent Henderson has met with local legislators to detail Aberdeen's specific financial crisis, and conveyed budgetary challenges in board meetings and in district newsletters. On November 7th I represented the board and testified along with Jim Sawin at ESD 113 for a WSSDA regional meeting.

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On January 23rd I represented the board along with members of the Budget Advisory Committee (Patrick Farwell, Debbi Ross, and Kris Koski), and met with 20 legislators and/or legislative aides at the Capitol to implore them to fix the budget disparities. Budget documents, meeting notes, and projected deficits have been posted on our district website. Further, The Daily World has run numerous stories regarding the statewide and local impact of the McCleary decision, including [March 7](#); [Feb. 23](#); [Feb. 9](#); [Dec. 18, 2018](#); [July 17, 2018](#).

I value our staff. As a parent, Aberdeen resident and fellow educator, the last thing I want is to make cuts to district programs and staff. I recognize that cuts impact our kids. I recognize the disruption this may cause to staff and students. I acknowledge the pain it will cause employees to find new employment. I acknowledge that for many staff, they are the singular source of family income and benefits. I worked for the Aberdeen School District during a previous reduction in force. I saw the pain it caused district employees, and know that it took intentional planning and collaboration to manage the changes.

I do not take this decision lightly, as I am sure is the case with my fellow board members. We are required by statute to maintain a fund balance, and adopt a budget aligned with our district vision and plan that maintains that budget. We will continue to support our staff and students impacted by these reductions.

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I pledge to continue to talk with legislators about funding disparities and implore them to help our district. I encourage concerned citizens to do the same.