

2018

LEGISLATIVE BRIEF

FOR CONGRESSIONAL VISITS



EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT 112

Serving Children, Schools and Their Communities for Almost 50 Years

SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, ENGINEERING AND MATH (STEM) INITIATIVES

ESD 112 operates several STEM Initiatives that create powerful opportunities for teachers and students to engage in problem solving, collaboration and critical thinking necessary for college and career readiness.

- » **STEM Materials Center:** We develop Next Generation Science Standards instructional materials and provide K-8 STEM equipment kits to over 45,000 students. Our kits engage students in career-related learning by using local, authentic STEM problems, co-developed by business and industry partners. We are the only ESD that develops our own curricular materials with teacher leaders.
- » **CS@112:** We partner with state and national providers to bring K-12 professional development to teachers, as well as develop our own workshops. Our team is the first Launch CS affiliate program in the state, bringing integrated computer science to K-5 teachers.

We are part of an AESD grant partnership that will grow teacher leadership through a regional Professional Learning Community this year. We have a small robotics loan program that allows rural districts equitable access to these opportunities.

- » **nPower Girls:** We want teachers to fill confident and addressing STEM content and in introducing students to the possibilities in STEM careers. nPower Teachers partners with local STEM business and industry to provide half-day teacher externships to deepen content knowledge, followed by a half-day of supported lesson development that includes career awareness. In 2018-19 we will focus the program on Climate Science.
- » **PBL (Project-based Learning) Institutes:** As a response to the demand for more integration of STEM, and strategies to engage students in 21st

Century Skills, ESD112 established a highly trained PBL Coaching staff and led three, 30 hour training institutes beginning in summer 2018 for over 150 educators from 11 districts. This initiative is our fastest growing program.

- » **SW WA STEM Network:** ESD112 is the first ESD to establish a STEM Director position that oversees the Teaching and Learning support of our STEM Network in direct partnership with the Executive Director. Twenty-seven districts are members of the STEM Network. Districts work with the Director as a leadership team to develop strategic plans for implementing their unique STEM vision in collaboration with local industry and higher education to bring career-related learning to students.



the ESA is committed to working collaboratively with families, schools and communities to increase academic achievement and prepare children for college and a career—regardless of their disability status. Without the ESD 112 ESA services, most rural districts we serve would struggle to provide appropriate, beneficial special education services.

Funding at the 40% level would add \$2 million to the ESD 112 ESA budget to help bridge the gap in funding required special education services.

IDEA REAUTHORIZATION

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was originally enacted by Congress in 1975 to ensure that children with disabilities have the opportunity to receive a free appropriate public education, just like other children. Special education services under this law have never been funded at the original legislation's commitment of 40%. In fact, federal contributions for special education services are approximately 18%.

To bridge this gap, districts are forced to use local levy taxes to pay for special education, causing inequities in services and learning opportunities for students. The State of Washington has added funding to special education under the *McCleary Decision*; **however, a significant funding gap remains.**

Other trends we are seeing

- Skyrocketing incidences of mental health issues in young children.
- More special education students are moving into rural school districts where services are more difficult to access.
- A tremendous teacher shortage among special education teachers and educational service professionals.

The ESD 112 ESA is a unique consortium of 26 member districts across Washington State. ESD 112 staff provide all special education services to these districts including planning, delivering, monitoring, evaluating, and supervising specially designed programs to meet the needs of children identified with disabilities. Serving 1,800 students,

EARLY CARE AND EDUCATION

ESD 112 offers a robust menu of services in early care and education that support children, families, early learning staff and child care providers. **For example:**

- » **The Early Head Start home visiting program** serves 55 pregnant moms and their children aged birth to three in Clark County.
- » **ESD 112 received the EHS-Child Care Partnership and Expansion grant** to add 84 slots in blended programs throughout Southwest Washington.
- » **207 child care programs are enrolled in Early Achievers in SW Washington;** 103 of those programs are rated, with 95 rated level 3-5.
- » **The Southwest Washington Child Care Consortium (SWCCC)** serves nearly 1,700 children ages birth to 12 at 34 centers; 18% of our families are accessing child care subsidies.

Your continued support of early care and education programs is critical.

We urge Congress to continue its work to support programs that benefit our youngest learners, their parents and their caregivers. **Specifically:**

- » **Supporting the integration of child care, preschool and family support services as much as possible.** Our state and federal funds come with cost allocation restrictions which prohibit the use of these funds for children outside of these programs. In a blended classroom, this can mean that a child who is just above the poverty line does not have access to all of the resources and supports that may be necessary for his/her success. Other programs cannot share the services due to restrictions on funding.
- » **Support ESD 112's application for Head Start and Early Head Start.** The existing Head Start contract has been identified for recompetition through DRS in the coming year. ESD 112 intends to apply

for approximately 550 slots serving children and families in Clark, Cowlitz and Pacific Counties. We ask for your support of our application so that we can continue to provide high quality programs and services to our most vulnerable children and ensure that they have a great foundation for success.



Push for approval of the Child Care for Working Families Act

Due to minimum wage increases as well as increasing costs for rent, utilities and materials we were forced to increase our child care rates by 15% this year. This placed a huge burden on the families we serve. The reimbursement rate for child care subsidies does not cover the true cost of child care and often the private pay families are asked to pay more to offset the difference.

The proposed Child Care for Working Families Act would improve training and compensation for child care workers, ensure affordable child care for families, and support universal preschool for three and four year olds.



THANK YOU for your support of our Early Head Start-Child Care Partnership grant and for working so hard to ensure access to high quality preschool and child care for vulnerable children and families in Southwest Washington!

TEEN SUICIDE AND MENTAL HEALTH

Suicide is the third leading cause of death among youth ages 10-24 in our nation. Ninety percent of those who died by suicide had an underlying mental illness. One in five children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness. Mental illness has a serious impact on students and families in schools and communities across the state of Washington. Battle Ground, one of our region's largest school districts, just completed its third year of a SAMSHA (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) federal grant that provides school based mental health services. Called Project AWARE, Washington is one of 20 states to receive this grant. During the last year in Battle Ground, 465 students were referred, and 368 were enrolled in mental health services. Overall, youth who received these services showed significant reductions in problem severity across all areas of concern.

This year, Educational Service District 112 will expand its Student Threat Assessment System into four additional counties in our region, and the remaining eight Educational Service Districts in Washington State are currently working to build capacity to also implement the program.

The Salem-Keizer Student Threat Assessment System was developed in response to the recommendations made in the Safe Schools Initiative Report, developed by the Secret Service, and released in 2002. This report recommended developing a program and system where school and community partners communicate and share concerns on students and develop intervention and support plans. School districts in Clark County, Washington, implemented this program in 2007, and expanded the work to neighboring Cowlitz County in 2015.

In July of 2018, the Secret Service released an updated report, *Enhancing School Safety Using a Threat Assessment Model: An Operational Guide for Preventing Targeted School Violence*. This report reinforced the strong recommendation from the Secret Service that school districts and communities adopt and implement this model as an effective intervention. Federal funding support for states, school districts and communities to implement and manage this program should continue to be a legislative priority.

MAIN OFFICE

EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT 112
2500 NE 65th Avenue, Vancouver, WA 98661-6812

www.esd112.org

P 360.750.7500 **F** 360.750.9706 **TDD** 360.750.7510



THANK YOU for supporting adequate funding resources for our most vulnerable students. We urge Congress to follow through on their original commitment to fund special education at 40%. Increased federal funding was initially promised but has not materialized.



We are committed to working collectively to bring equity and opportunity to children and families throughout the region.

ESD112

ESD 112 is an Equal Opportunity Employer