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ELGIN/NEW LEIPZIG PUBLIC SCHOOL
DISTRICT #49

Russell Ziegler, Superintendent



Home of the Coyotes

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January 24, 2023

Chairman Elkin and members of the Senate Education Committee,

I am Dr. Russ Ziegler, Superintendent for the Elgin/New Leipzig School District #49 (E/NL). I am here today to testify in support of SB 2328. The addition to section 15.1-27-03.1 which would increase the weighting factor for schools that have under 200 students but over 400 square miles would be very helpful to the E/NL schools. Currently E/NL schools has an average daily membership of 155.09 students. students in grades pk – 12 and consistest are 694 square miles. Because of the size of the district and the number of students Elgin/New Leipzig is one of the Transistion Minimum schools. When the formula changed from Land to Students the district would have taken a large hit to it's operating revenue. The legislature grandfathered in that for schools like us we would be able to keep the funding we had originally. Now as we are trying to get back onto the formula 15% of that dollar amount is being subtracted every year to get us there, currently we are on year two so that is 30%. For the 2022-2023 school year that equated to 30% of \$352,809.81 which is \$105,842.94. Estimating the 2023 – 2024 the transistion minimum reducation for E/NL would be 45% of \$352,809.81 which would be approximately \$158,764.41. That is a cut in revenue of 52,921.47 in one year.

However, the issue comes when we have declining enrollment. In my opinion the E/NL school could adequately educate 75 - 100 more students spread out over the 12 grades, with no additional staffing or expenses. Having that many more students would generate at the minimum of $75 * \$10,237 = \$767,775$. Because the funding formula is based off of the number of students, we lose funding when the student number drops and we lose funding to get us onto the formula. It is a lose-lose situation. SB 2328 would help in that it would increase the weighting for schools of our size with a large land mass. That would help offset the loss we see in getting onto the formula.

Schools of this size are on a disadvantage because we have the same expenses as others but we do not have the revenue (number of students) others do. We have to work with older facilities, with minimal staff to make ends meet. Adding the weighting factor proposed by this bill will help with the inherent inequity in the formula. Because of that we support SB 2328.

Thank you,
Dr. Russ Ziegler