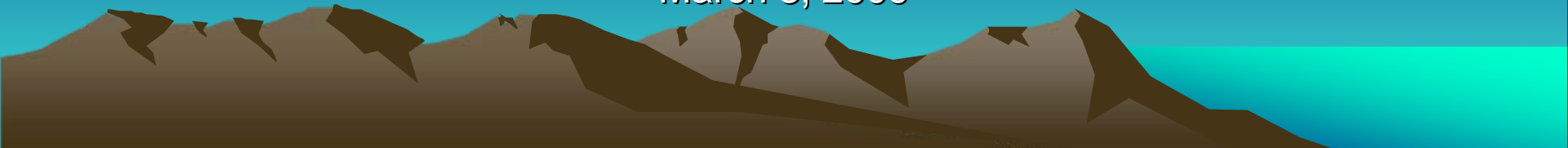


# School Consolidation Mini-Summit

**Desiree Gould – WASA**  
**Jim Kowalkowski – REC**  
**Elissa Dyson – WSSDA**  
**John Dekker – WASA**

WASA Small Schools Conference  
March 3, 2009



# Review of Recent “Developments”

- Before the recent comments by our Governor...
- The following wording is from the Governor’s proposed budget document which was submitted in December...



# Governor's Budget Proposal..

The superintendent of public instruction is to conduct the following activity to identify efficiencies in the organization and structure of school districts:

The superintendent **shall** make recommendations for a **streamlined school district consolidation process**, develop appropriate criteria, and provide needed statutory goals to meet the following goals:



- Reduce operating costs;
- Reduce administrative duplication; and
- Create efficiencies to offer better programmatic opportunities to students.



# Governor's Budget Proposal...

Recommendations shall also include specific proposals for realigned school districts.



# Governor's Budget Proposal...

The superintendent of public instruction shall report to the governor and the appropriate legislative committees by  
**Nov. 1, 2009**



# Recent Statements by Our Governor...

- *"It's time for us to see a new path forward. And that is the challenge before us, that is the opportunity before us." Gregoire said she's included a request for the state to study the viability of school consolidations in her budget proposal. While working on that budget, she said, advisers told her "you cannot utter the word 'consolidation.' Well, I am uttering the word 'consolidation,'" Gregoire said Wednesday.*



- *"I don't get it. I don't get why we have 50 (schools) that have less than 150 students. "Instead of several small schools with distinct staff, equipment and budgets, the public-school system should use "technology and transportation" to combine educational efforts and save money. Community and technical colleges already have shown that online learning can be effective, Gregoire said. Young people, she said, are adept at using new technology, "but we're still a book and a teacher. There's a new and a better way to do things."*



- “When nearly a third of our high school students do not graduate on time with their peers, we have work to do. We must design our middle and high schools so that no student gets lost in the crowd and disconnected from his or her own potential. “

[Christine Gregoire](#)

BrainyQuote

[www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/christine\\_gregoire.html](http://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/authors/c/christine_gregoire.html)

# OSPI

- *Not “excited” about completing a study of “consolidation” along with recommending “specific proposals for realigned school districts”*



“We gotta do something!”



# *Who will decide?*

- The Legislature!
- “Forced school consolidation will happen over my dead body!”

*Kathy Haigh, Chair of House  
Educations Appropriations  
Committee*



# Developing “Talking Points”

- There does not “appear” to be any significant movement toward consolidation of school districts in the Legislature as of right now...
- However, this appears to be a “national movement” ...
- Let’s develop talking points to share with legislators and to be ready...



# SCHOOL SIZE: RESEARCH BASED CONCLUSIONS

Research links small school size with high levels of achievement and cost effectiveness



# Small Schools Get Academic Results

- Small schools have high student achievement and low dropout rates
- More small schools graduates go to college, and students from smaller schools do as well or better in college
- Small schools are particularly effective for students from low-income families and for students of color, helping to reduce the achievement gap

# Small Schools Promote Better Student Behavior

- Teachers and students in small schools are rarely victims of crime
- Small schools allow teachers to focus more on teaching and less on discipline

# Small Schools Have Higher Rates of Participation

Students who participate in activities at school have higher achievement, are less likely to drop out, have higher self-esteem, attend school more regularly, and have fewer behavior problems.

- Small schools create many opportunities for participation, so a larger percentage of students participate and they participate in more kinds of activities
- Small schools also have higher levels of parental involvement, and parental involvement is a critical factor in student success
- In sparsely settled areas, [consolidating small districts into] one large school would mean drawing students from a very large area, and travel time alone would discourage many parents and students from participating

# Small Schools Are Cost-Effective

- School consolidation often increases transportation costs, offsetting any savings

- Increased behavior problems and dropout rates add “hidden” costs

- Because small schools graduate a higher percentage of students, their cost per graduate is comparable to larger schools even if cost per enrolled student is not

# Small Schools Strengthen Local Economies

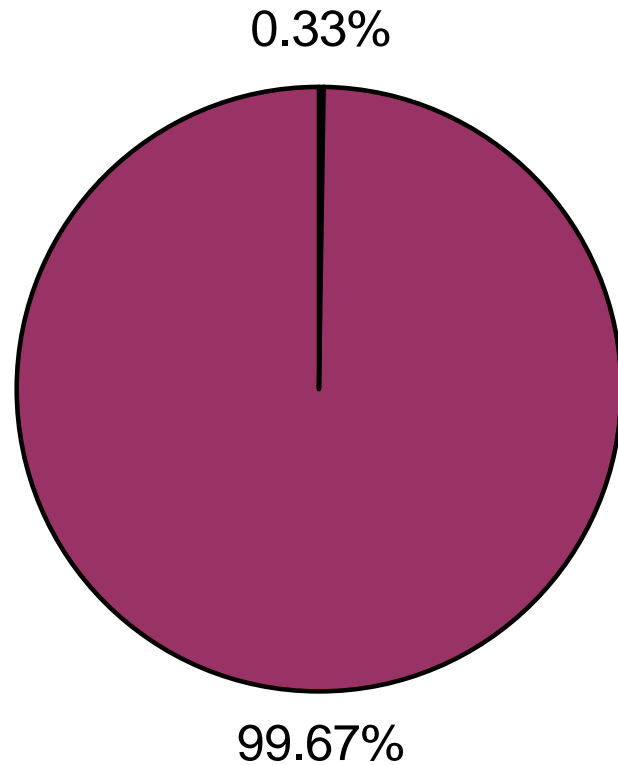
- Rural communities with schools have higher rates of growth, higher housing values, a lower percentage of households receiving public assistance, more professional workers and entrepreneurs, and higher per capita self-employment income than rural communities that had lost their schools
- Schools are essential in retaining population in diverse geographic areas
- Because high school dropouts earn less than high school graduates and are far more likely to be unemployed, to depend on public assistance, and to end up in prison, small schools help increase the number of economically productive adults and cut government costs



This presentation based on research studies analyzed  
by The Rural School and Community Trust

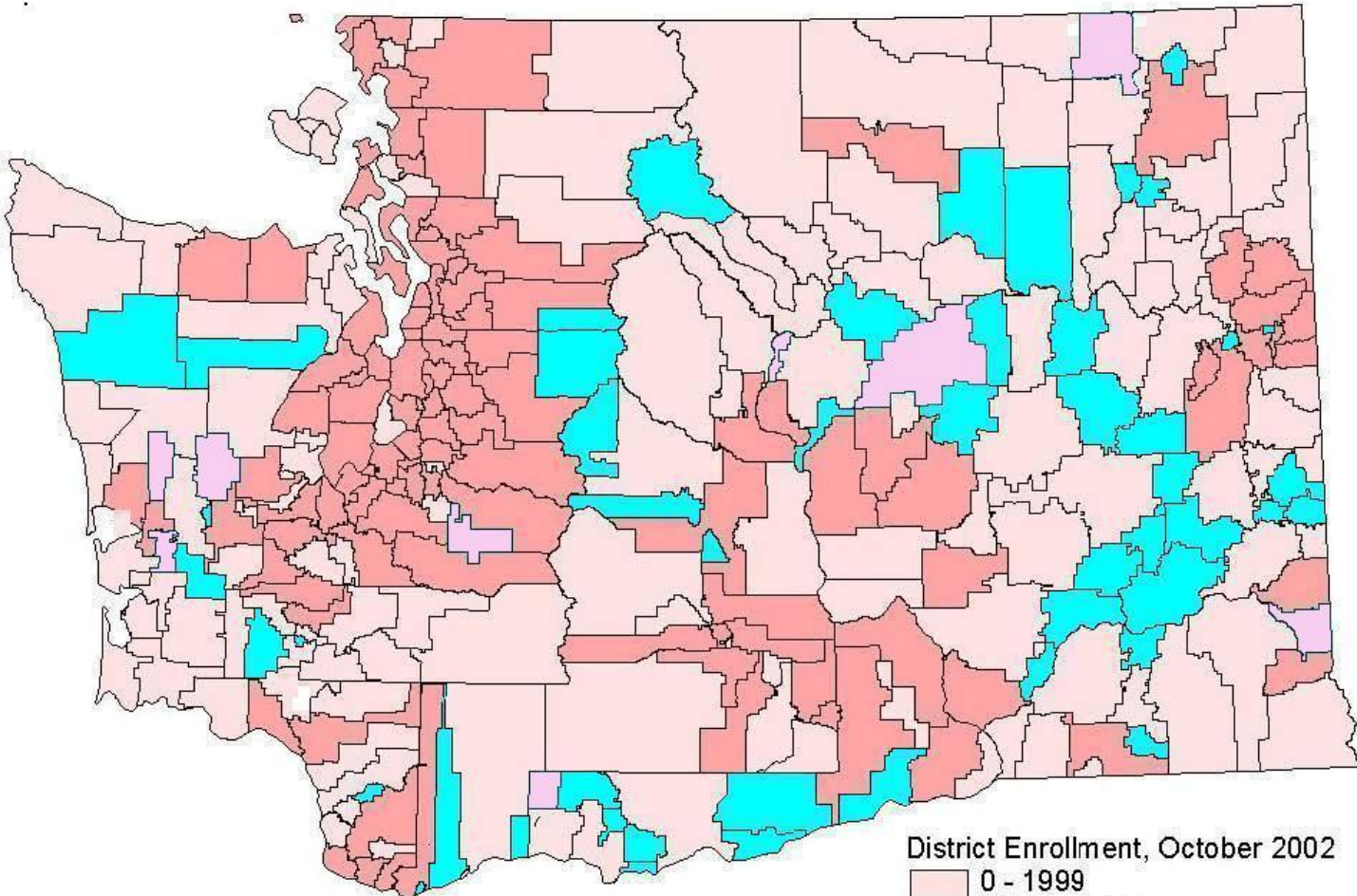


# Eliminating 50 Smallest Districts



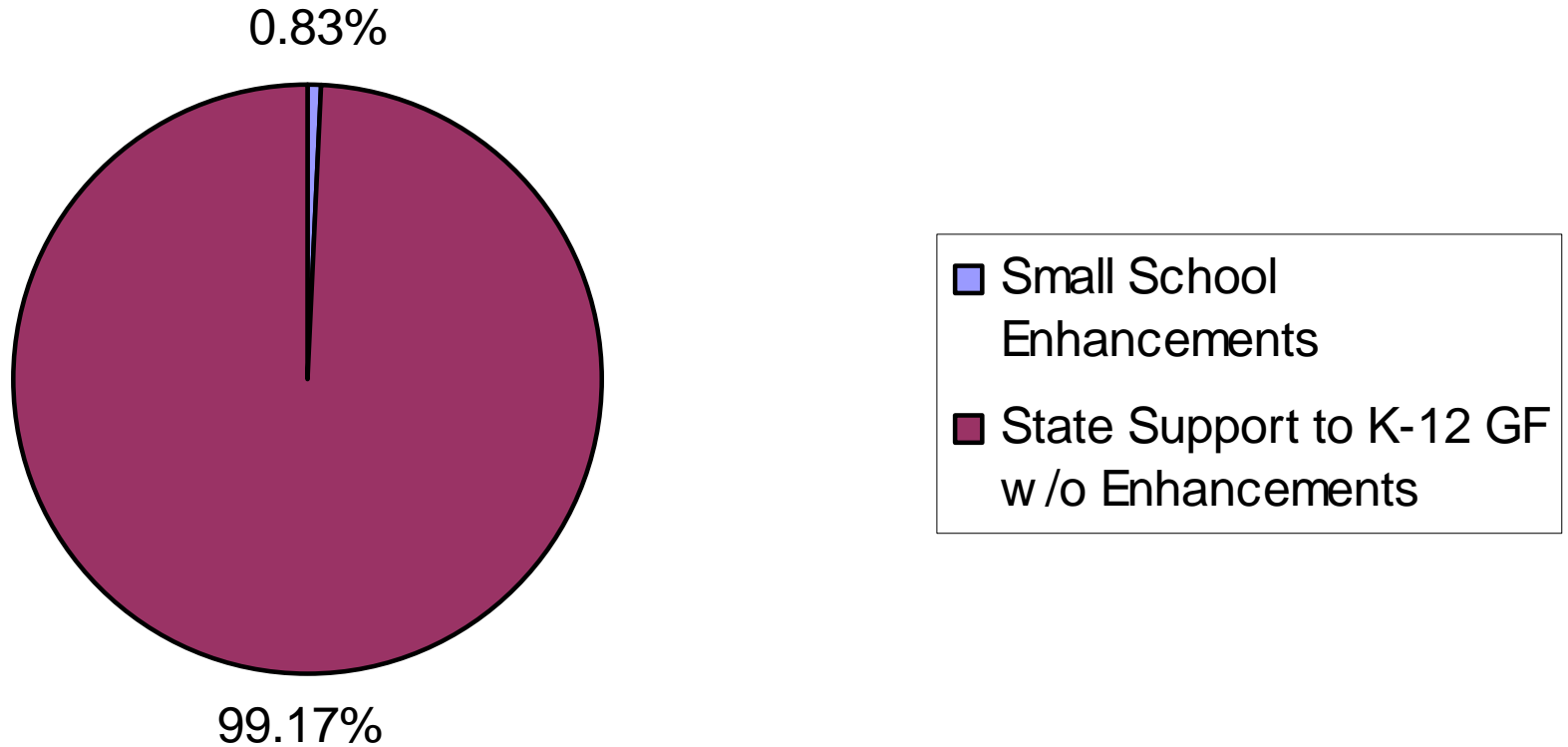
- Small School Enhancements
- State Support to K-12 GF w/o Enhancements

# 50 Smallest Districts

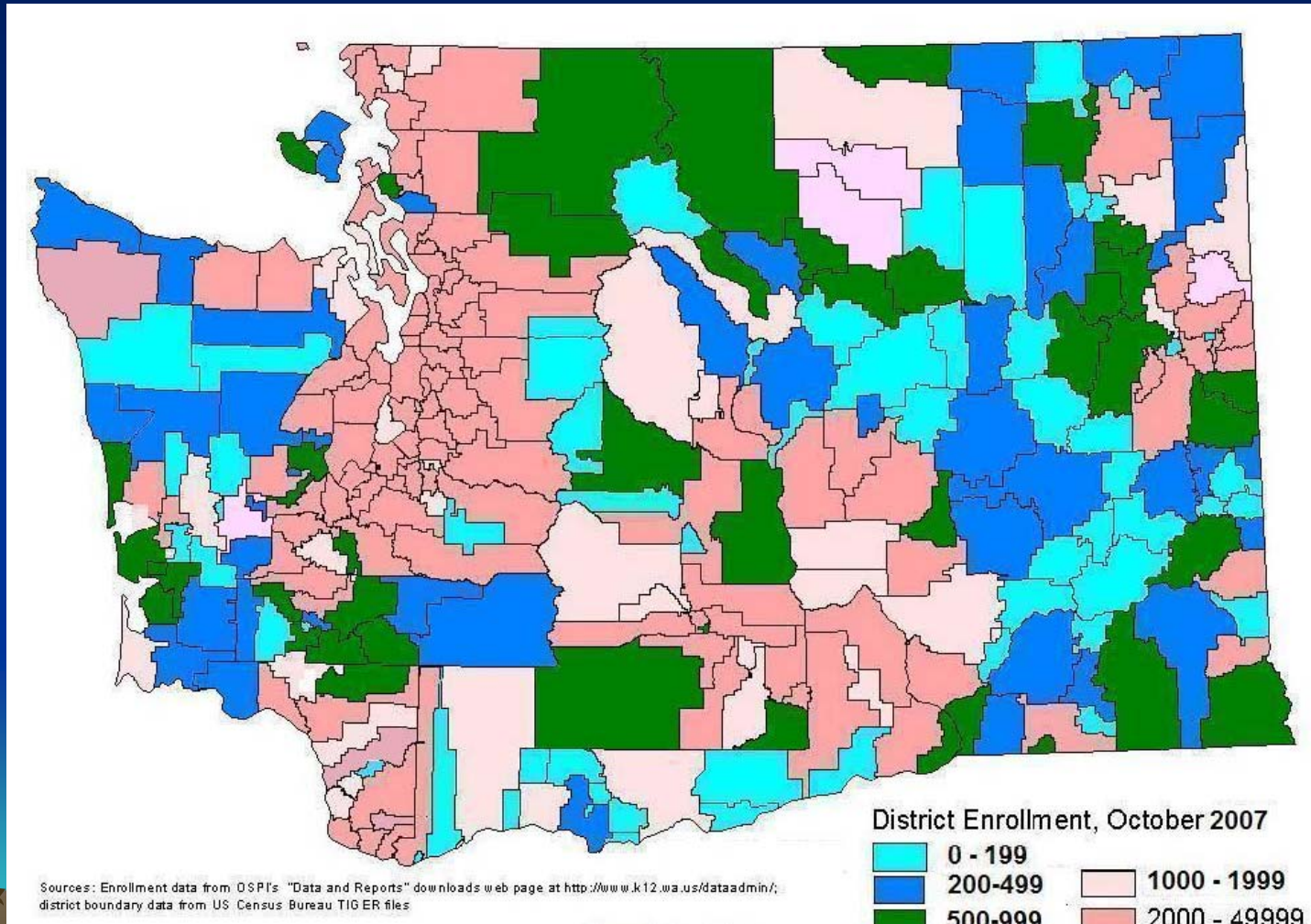


Sources: Enrollment data from OSPI's "Data and Reports" downloads web page at <http://www.k12.wa.us/dataadmin/>;  
district boundary data from US Census Bureau TIGER files

# All Small District Enhanced Funds



# Eliminating Small School Funding Affects Districts Up To 1000 FTEs



# Resources

- Small Schools Travel Time- OSPI – 1995
- Dollars & Sense – Knowledge Works Foundation & The Rural School And Community Trust - 2002
- M.A.S.S Small and Rural School District Task Force Report – 2008
- National Conference of State Legislatures Website – 2002
- The Fiscal Impacts of School Consolidation – The Rural School & Community Trust Website – [www.ruraledu.org](http://www.ruraledu.org)

# Talking Points

- Small School Enhancements make up less than 1% of the State's apportionment.
- Increased transportation costs offset a portion of those modest potential savings.
- When small communities lose their school, they lose their sense of identity and feel less connected and supportive of their serving school.
- Small districts often increase efficiency through employing part-time administrators, sharing administrative and program costs through cooperative efforts.



# Talking Points Cont'

- Kids will spend more time on buses and lose opportunities for co-curricular participation, an indicator of future success
- Kids will lose the sense of community that small schools offer, a factor for success.
- Saves little when you consider:
  - Class loads in receiving districts
  - Transportation
  - Buildings remaining still need administrative supervision
  - Building closed increase bus riding times for small children and reduce local support & involvement



# Table Discussion Guide

- Select recorder & be prepared to report back
- Review talking points & resources to answer these questions:
  - What are the three most powerful messages?
  - If consolidation discussions proceed in Olympia, what steps would you take in your district?
  - What other information would be helpful to share with your community and legislators?



# For More Information

Links to Research and Downloads  
Available on the following websites:

- WASA: [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org)
- Rural Ed. Center:  
<http://ruraledcenter.wsu.edu/>
- AASA: [www.aasa.org](http://www.aasa.org)

