

Supporting Local Education

A Conversation with Jefferson County Superintendents

In May 2022, Jefferson Community Foundation and *Better Living Through Giving* met with all five Jefferson County school district superintendents to gain insight into the needs of local students, faculty, staff, and families. By sharing highlights from that conversation, we can inform a better understanding of how our community can support public education. Serving students and families on the rural Olympic Peninsula comes with unique challenges, and presents JCF donors and fundholders with opportunities to impact immediate and lasting change.



Melvin Houtz, Superintendent
Queets-Clearwater School District
Kindergarten - 8th
Students: 49



Patricia Beathard, Superintendent
Brinnon School District
P-Kindergarten - 8th
Students: 75



Frank Redmon, Superintendent
Quilcene School District
P-Kindergarten - 12th
Students: 215
+ 430 alternative remote learning



Scott Mauk, Superintendent
Chimacum School District
P-Kindergarten - 12th
Students: 650



CHIMACUM
SCHOOL DISTRICT

Linda Rosenbury, Superintendent
Port Townsend School District
P-Kindergarten - 12th
Students: 1,190



Needs and Opportunities

Our conversation with the superintendents highlighted the following:

- Each serves very different populations and demographics and community cultures. Those need to be understood and respected.
- All are pursuing grants and bonds to offset the cost of basic needs, programs and services that are mandated by WA State yet are not fully funded by the State. This makes it even more difficult to secure resources for new, emerging needs above and beyond the basics.
- Addressing facility maintenance, repair, and development needs is a continuing need, though the extent varies by district.
- All districts are struggling to recruit and retain high-quality staff and faculty amid Jefferson County's housing crisis. Districts have begun to jointly hire and share part-time staff members to fill two vacant positions with one full-time employee.
- Each district is resourced differently by Washington State based on size, poverty level, regionalization, etc. Average teachers' salaries are set by the State and then adjusted by region e.g., Brinnon receives a 0% bump while Chimacum received 12% and Port Townsend 10%.
- All districts are experiencing mental and behavioral health challenges at all grade levels, and seeing these trends extended to staff and faculty. The challenge, though, is a lack of State funding for mental health services. This is hard to sustain with underwriting from independent donors, so the best strategy is local advocacy to the State for adequate and sustained funding.
- All districts are working for greater diversity in staff, faculty, and classroom curriculum so that BIPOC students feel represented in the community culture.

How Can Donors Impact Jefferson County Schools?

Advocacy

The superintendents agreed that local community members advocating for adequate and sustained government funding is most impactful. Recommended advocacy resources include:

- [The School Funding Coalition | 2022 Legislative Priorities](#)
Comprised of seven statewide education associations, including WSSDA, representing almost 8,000 school district leaders from our state's 295 school districts, the Coalition brings a front-line understanding of school district financing and education funding issues.
- [Washington Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#)
- [WA Legislature, House of Representatives, Education Committee](#)
- [WA Legislature, Senate, Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee](#)

Charitable Giving Opportunities

School Libraries | All Jefferson County School Districts

Requesting continued funding to keep school and classroom libraries current. Chimacum has a specific current request of \$10,000 to purchase books.

Facilities Improvement | Queets-Clearwater School District

Requesting \$8,000 to fund facility improvements and parking lot repaving.

Mental Health | Brinnon School District

Requesting is for \$2,500 up to \$13,500 to fund this service for a quarter to a year. \$500 funds one full day of mental health counseling in the school.

Facilities Improvement | Quilcene School District

Requesting \$5,000 to fund the conversion of the Quilcene Bus Barn into an outdoor classroom and farmers market.

Mental Health | Chimacum School District

Requesting \$7,900 to fund the conversion of an existing district facility into a "play therapy" room operated in partnership with Jumping Mouse.

BIPOC Student Union | Port Townsend School District

Requesting \$10,000 to fund trips, speakers, and events for Port Townsend BIPOC students and families.

Family Partnership | Port Townsend School District

Requesting \$10,000 to fund quarterly community events for Port Townsend School District students and families.

Let's Do More by Doing Together!

For more information about how to support Education & Youth Opportunities with charitable gifts, contact Jefferson Community Foundation at (360) 385-1729 or info@JCFgives.org.