

MY NAME  
Ladies and Gentlemen:

SUPT. BLISS SCHOOL DIST.

I appreciate the opportunity to stand in front of you today a comment on the funding formula as it pertains to Bliss and similar small schools. I recognize the work on our behalf in particular as we have moved from a devastating number of losing over \$375,000 and the closing of our district to only losing \$35,000. While these small numbers amount to near nothing in the big scheme of things, it could literally mean the loss of one of the few opportunities we offer at Bliss. I am sure the scenarios of the other small schools Mullan, Nez Perce, Midvale, Cambridge, Culdesac, Camas, etc. that are losing money will have a similar story or worse.

I have been a superintendent/principal in Bliss for the past 25 years. I am an educator, not a politician and feel very out of place as I stand before you. It seems to me that decisions have been made that say our tiny districts are not as important in the current formula as they were in the old, that somehow it has been determined we have been receiving too much of the pie and the excess is being taken and given to those with higher needs.

Since the formula to determine wealth makes us a wealthy district, I thought it was important to share with you that that does not compute into money for our students. Here are a few facts about our district:

- We are down from near 90% but 80% of our students receiving Free and Reduced Lunches
- It has been years since there has been a "student supply list" for starting school. We buy all student supplies. No one is left out and no one is made to feel like they are less than their classmates as they all receive the same pencils, crayons, markers, paper and binders. Many of our families just don't have the ability to purchase these supplies.
- We have a plant levy of to maintain our 100 year old main building. We had saved enough money over the years that this summer we were able to install heating and air systems to replace our coal furnace. Believe it or not, this is the first time in 25 years that someone other than our maintenance man who shoveled the coal, stayed warm. I have witnessed many times, students with hats, gloves and jackets sitting at their desks doing their work. Never again!

The idea of a simple funding formula is an awesome concept and as the committee has found that awesome concept becomes more and more complicated as we narrow this down to a final product. In most cases the formula works, but in the case of Bliss and other similar districts we need help. Please consider our plight as you finalize your work. Thank you.