



NORTH BEND SCHOOL DISTRICT 1

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For many years the schools on the South Coast have been losing students because of the restrictions on fishing and timber harvesting and the subsequent disappearance of businesses that have supported these activities. It is projected that further erosion of business opportunities will decrease with the elimination of train service to a metropolitan area.

When schools lose enrollment the array of programs offered to students decreases. The smaller the high school the fewer electives are available to students. For example, our high school currently offers professional technical classes, art, and music with multi levels and content in each area. In my experience, these types of programs disappear as enrollment decreases as there are not enough students to fill such classes. Districts cannot afford to hire teachers for classrooms that do not have 25 or more students given the funding levels. The high school begins to become a mainly "academic required" type program with minimum access to those types of classes of high interest to students. We are still able to maintain the bare necessities of professional technical, art, dance, and music but usually in just one or two of the areas rather than the array found in high schools of 700 plus students. This is not to say that professional technical, music and art are not academic and do not teach students academic skills. They do. It is just that students need the full of array of these classes as they need the full array of required English, math and science.

This not only occurs in the area of academic programs but also in the extra-curricular program offerings and after school academic programs to assist those children who need additional time with a

teacher. We currently have students who attend an after school credit recovery class, these types of classes also end up being eliminated when enrollment falls below a critical mass. When a high school gets too small they often do not have enough students to complete a team in some of the sports or activities that do not commonly draw a large portion of the student body. Every opportunity lost to a student translates into a student who may be more at risk.

My experience and the research is very clear that students who have access to an array of classes and extra-curricular activities that include those outside of the “required” do better in school and usually attend more consistently. This then leads to students who are better prepared to enter the workforce and become productive members of society.

With the advent of No Child Left Behind and increased paperwork requirements for schools, we find we must hire additional people to stay in compliance which again impacts our ability to place teachers in classrooms as there is only so much money.

I am concerned that the elimination or reduction of train service to the South Coast could accelerate the loss of students we are already experiencing and therefore diminish our programs. I would urge you to find a compromise that will allow railroad service to continue and allow businesses to flourish on the South Coast.

Thank you.

BJ Hollensteiner, EdD