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Daniel K Grimm

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TO: Task Force Members  
FROM: Dan Grimm  
DATE: 24 November 2008  
RE: Task Force Deliberations

Attached is a copy of a letter from the Full Funding Coalition expressing "grave concerns" about the direction of the Task Force. A copy of my response also is attached.

As we begin our formal consideration of proposals, please note SB 5627 imposes on the Task Force a responsibility to consider the state's overall budget situation. Section 2(b) stipulates "a phased-in implementation of a new funding system that does not exceed six years," and "One of the [funding] options must be... within existing resources."

Notwithstanding the provisions of SB 5627, I urge members to follow the advice offered by Representative Skip Priest at our last meeting. We should make decisions and recommendations based on what is best for future generations of Washington students and their families. We should not be distracted by transient financial circumstances, regardless of how dire they may be for the next few years.

Nor should we be deterred by the threat of controversy. Ours is a higher obligation: to demonstrate leadership; to figure out what needs to be done and have the guts to say it – even if it means 'setting some hair on fire.' One of the hallmarks of leadership is a willingness to be unpopular.

An educational generation ago, Governor Booth Gardner had the guts to say the time had come for the state to establish academic standards for our public school system. His proposal was not universally popular. It still isn't.

At a 1989 meeting of the Washington State School Directors' Association, Gardner said, "It's the status quo in education that puts us, as a nation, at risk." More recently, the November, 2006 Washington Learns report asserts, "It is an economic necessity that we change our entire education system."

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*Daniel K Grimm*

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Paul W. Rosier  
Executive Director  
Washington Association of School Administrators  
825 Fifth Avenue SE  
Olympia, Washington 98501

Dear Mr. Rosier:

Thank you for your letter dated November 19, 2008, expressing "grave concerns about the direction the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance is taking."

The Task Force was established by Senate Bill 5627. The bill is broadly constructed, with a number of general and specific assignments. It imposes no limitations on matters the Task Force may consider, which is consistent with the title of the Act and the comprehensive scope of the 2006 Washington Learns report cited in your letter.

The Task Force has held numerous public hearings and work sessions. No one has been denied an opportunity to ask questions, submit proposals or provide information, orally or in writing. There have been several instances when representatives of the Full Funding Coalition have been included in Task Force deliberations.

Task Force deliberations are being conducted by consensus. Discussions among members have been constructive and respectful. Our goal is to arrive at recommendations supported by a majority of members voting while allowing all proposals to be fairly considered. I have emphasized repeatedly that any member may at any time submit any proposal or make any motion.

Despite your grave concerns, please be assured the direction being taken by the Task Force is to make recommendations in the best interest of students and their families. I greatly appreciate the contributions of the Full Funding Coalition and look forward to your advice and counsel as we conclude our work.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a large, stylized 'D' followed by 'Grimm' in a cursive script.

Dan Grimm  
Task Force Chairman



November 19, 2008

Dan Grimm, Chair  
Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance  
2816 10<sup>th</sup> Street Ct. SE  
Puyallup, WA 98374-1301

Dear Chair Grimm:

The Full Funding Coalition is writing to express our grave concerns about the direction the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance is taking.

Engrossed Second Substitute Senate Bill 5627 NEW SECTION. Sec. 2. (1) states: "The joint task force on basic education finance established under this section, with research support from the Washington state institute for public policy, shall review the definition of basic education and all current basic education funding formulas, develop options for a new funding structure and all necessary formulas, and propose a new definition of basic education that is realigned with the new expectations of the state's education system as established in the November 2006 final report of the Washington learns steering committee and the basic education provisions established in chapter 28A.150 RCW."

Discussions occurring at Task Force meetings as well as comments made at meetings in the field by legislators serving on the Task Force, lead the Coalition to believe that the Task Force is no longer focusing on its main charge. Issues and topics that were not specified in the legislation, were not fully researched, received no testimony or input from stakeholders, and ultimately, will not be the solution to providing adequate funding for public schools (like teacher preparation, certification and evaluation, principal tenure, accounting and data systems, and collective bargaining), are distracting the Task Force from addressing its basic charge and are preventing it from accomplishing its legislative mandates. Furthermore: agendas were rarely available until a few days before the meetings; more often than not, materials which were the subject of the Task Force discussions were not provided to those of us who were attempting to follow the proceedings while they were in progress; and the decision-making process for what will be the final report is convoluted and confusing.

The Full Funding Coalition has complied with every stipulation given to them for submitting a proposal—from timelines, to making a presentation to the Task Force, to obtaining sponsors, to providing bill language. The Coalition's proposal also meets the criteria in the legislation. It aligns funding with the definition of basic education for students in the twenty-first century and it is research-based, comprehensive, systemic, and dynamic. None of the other proposals meet all of these requirements.

Chairman Grimm  
November 19, 2008  
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The Full Funding Coalition strongly believes that the piecemeal approach being used to arrive at the Task Force "recommendations" will lead to a final report that lacks the cohesion a new system for financing our schools must have if it is to be effective. We urge the Task Force to focus on the specific requirements of the legislation and to give our proposal serious consideration.

Sincerely,



WASA Executive Director



WEA President



WSSDA Executive Director



AWSP Executive Director



PSE Executive Director

cc: Members of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance  
Governor Christine Gregoire  
Representative Frank Chop, Speaker of the House  
Senator Rosemary McAuliffe  
Representative Dave Quall  
Roxanne Lieb