

FAQ: McCleary, School Funding, and Teacher Salaries

In the past months, you may have heard many different points of view regarding the McCleary decision and its impact on teacher salaries. In this section, we hope to provide some common questions with answers found from a variety of sources.

Q. I thought McCleary stated that Washington had to fully fund education. Is that not true?

A. “To help move the full cost of salaries to the state budget, the Legislature recently approved a new system that will allocate an average of at least \$64,000 per teacher. Previously, the state allocated an average of about \$54,000 per teacher.”

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/news/politics-government/article161531653.html>

Q. What is the Dieringer School District’s total General Fund revenue?

A. It is projected to be \$22,893,462 for 2018-2019, compared to \$22,247,519 for 2017-2018 which is a 2.9% increase in revenues.

Q. Why are other school districts able to offer higher raises for teachers?

Washington State Schools Superintendent Chris Reykdal’s interview with MYNorthwest

“And districts were treated very differently,” Reykdal said. “There are some contracts that are coming out and really significant increases for teachers and the districts have resources. There are other districts who just simply didn’t get that kind of resource and it’s going to get a little bit tense over the next couple weeks as that becomes a reality.” Scott, Hanna (2018, August 15). *Superintendent asks for patience amid potential teacher strikes, and districts figure out funding*. Retrieved from <http://mynorthwest.com/1081795/reykdal-teacher-strikes-funding-2018/>?

Tacoma Public Schools Superintendent Carla Santorno’s letter to the Tacoma News Tribune Editorial Board

“In the new law, districts with an average teacher salary below the state average can give big salary increases. But districts such as Tacoma, which already have an average salary above the state average, are limited by the law to no more than a 3.1 percent increase for the 2018-2019 school year.” Santorno, Carla (2018, August 18). *State reduces Tacoma schools to financial losers*. Retrieved from

<https://www.thenewstribune.com/opinion/article216808465.html>

State Average Allocation per teacher \$71,711

Dieringer School District \$73,042

Issaquah SD	Settled 14.9%	Avg Salary \$74,032
Lake Washington SD	Settled 12.2%	Avg Salary \$73,655
Shoreline SD	Settled 24.2%	Avg Salary \$81,817

Q. What is Regionalization? Why is it important and why did it hurt Dieringer School District?

A. “The regional factor is really important, recognizing the fact that the cost of living is higher in some parts of the state than others,” said House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan, D-Covington, who helped negotiate the school policy changes. As you can see from the chart below, that is not true for Dieringer.

Regionalization versus Median Housing Cost (Redfin.com):

Dieringer SD Regionalization	1.12	Not Settled	MHC 548,000
Sumner SD Regionalization	1.12	Not Settled	MHC 400,000
Auburn SD Regionalization	1.18	Not Settled	MHC 449,000

Q. How is Dieringer School District’s funding different than other school districts that have been able to offer teachers large pay raises? Didn’t the McCleary decision provide millions of dollars specifically for teacher salary increases?

A. “While a few changes were made to improve the new salary-funding model in the 2018 legislative session, we still have far too many districts who are the losers. Yes, overall much more money is going to fund teacher salaries. However, much of this money is going to a limited number of districts. The new funding mechanism for teacher salaries will actually create more losers than winners. This is due to the increased regionalization pay (high 1.24 -winners to low 1.0-losers) and/or the increased experience-factor pay that some districts will get. These “winner” districts will be able to attract and retain their teachers by offering a much more competitive salary than many other districts – even some that are located right next door. There are 295 school districts in our state. When you run the numbers, you find that 160 school districts (54 percent) in our state are the losers; these districts will not receive any of the additional regionalization and/or experience factor.”

Jim Kowalkowski, Superintendent, Davenport School District in Eastern Washington.

The Spokesman-Review (2018, July 9)

Q. What is the reality on funding for teacher salaries?

A. Seattle Times Editorial Board

“Because those local school district property-tax levies are set to go down starting in January 2019, not all of the added state money coming to districts is actually available for teacher salary increases – at least, not beyond next year . . . **Teachers can expect raises this year – just not double-digit ones.**” Seattle Times editorial board (2018, August 17). *Local school districts should stick to a basic principle as they renegotiate contracts with their teachers unions: Don’t bargain away money you don’t have.* <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/unsustainable-teacher-raises-risk-new-school-funding-crisis/>

Q: Did the district administration receive raises for the upcoming school year?

A: Yes. The Board approved a 3.1% cost of living increase at the June meeting.

Q. How has the McCleary decision impacted the Dieringer School District’s ability to receive levies support?

A. The Dieringer School District received \$3,589,961 increased state apportionment revenue.... but lose \$1,811,821 in levy collections. In the fall of 2018 we will receive \$3,248,750.00 from local levy. With the new levy system in the fall of 2019 we will receive \$1,356,244.00, a loss of \$1,892,506.00.

In addition, in the 2018-19 school year, Dieringer will expend approximately \$1.2m to surrounding high school district for our 9-12 grade students. For years 2019-22 that number is \$3,674,000. These amounts have traditionally been paid from local levy revenue. Due to the McCleary decision, the district can no longer collect any revenue to offset these mandatory expenditures.

[Risk Factor Analysis](#)

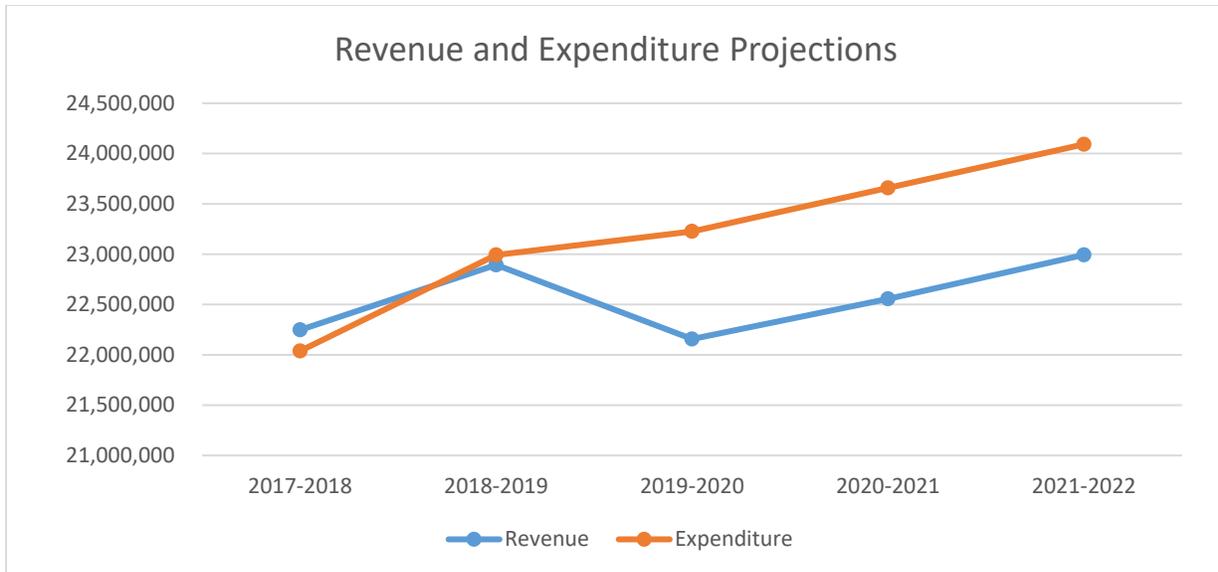
[McCleary 'fix' was a hoax](#)

Q. Why does the Dieringer School District focus so much on sustainability?

A. For the well-being of our students and staff, we must be able to fund not only the 2018-2019 budget, but also for the coming years.

The four-year budget, adopted by the Dieringer Board of Directors on 7/30/18, clearly demonstrates the challenge, given state funding increase of 3.1% in 2018-19, and 1.9%, 2.0%, 2.0% over the next three years.

School Year	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022
Revenues	22,247,519	22,893,462	22,157,013	22,555,959	22,993,631
Expenditures	22,038,697	22,992,424	23,226,132	23,659,016	24,091,952



This will result in a deficit ending fund balance of (\$647,714) by the 2020-21 school year.

Washington State Schools Superintendent Chris Reykdal’s interview with MYNorthwest

“I actually am more worried that districts feel like they have some fund balance right now to play with and that absolutely will not be the case a year from now when they are fully into the new [McCleary] model,” [Reykdal] added. “So the bargaining environment is harder right now the actual fiscal reality, I think, hits a lot more in years three and four.” Scott, Hanna (2018, August 15). *Superintendent asks for patience amid potential teacher strikes, and districts figure out funding*. Retrieved from <http://mynorthwest.com/1081795/reykdal-teacher-strikes-funding-2018/>

Seattle Times Editorial Board

“To avoid returning to a broken system, districts must hold the line when it comes to negotiating teachers’ raises, and not award more than they can afford. To do anything else is simply irresponsible.” Seattle Times editorial board (2018, August 17). *Local school districts should stick to a basic principle as they renegotiate contracts with their teachers unions: Don’t bargain away money you don’t have*. Retrieved from <https://www.seattletimes.com/opinion/editorials/unsustainable-teacher-raises-risk-new-school-funding-crisis/>

Q. What does the superintendent say?

A. The long-term viability of the Dieringer School District, we all love so dearly, is critical to our students. We must address the current issues while not losing sight of the long-term challenges that lie ahead. Addressing the salary interests of our 97 certificated staff is an important part, but Dieringer also has 125 additional employees who are critical to educating and serving our students. We want to do what is best for everybody: teachers, other members of our staff and, ultimately, our students.

As is becoming increasingly evident across Washington, the McCleary decision has created huge discrepancies in funding that are not fair or equitable. One has only to look across the state to see who are the winners and losers, who received the funding for double digit salary increases, and who will go into budget deficit with even more modest increases. As frustrating as it is, we must deal with great economic loss: approximately 60% of our local levy, the ability to annually levy the \$1.2-\$1.4 legally required to support our high school students, a regionalization factor that does not reflect our community costs, and the funds to pay for our teachers who are more experienced and more highly educated than the state average. We cannot commit to something that will not be sustainable. We are fully committed to continuing to bargaining in good faith toward the resolution of this difficult situation and achieve an agreement that is sustainable going forward.

Superintendent Dr. Judy Martinson

Q. What are the expected class sizes for 2018-2019?

2018-2019 Enrollment To-Date

	To-Date	Number of Students per Class	State Class Size**
K*	142	17.8	15.8
1	143	19.1	16.8
2	148	19.7	17.4
3	177	22.1	19.7
4	155	25.8	22.1
5	175	29.2	25
subtotal	940		
6	166	None in overload	
7	194	None in overload	
8	169	None in overload	
subtotal	529		
Total	1469		

LTES 468
DHES 472
NTMS 529

*Number of students in a classroom

**Number of students, per teacher and specialists, per state formula