

I have been watching incredulously as the House Ways and Means Committee is trying to 'rearrange the deck chairs on the Titanic' with regard to how to fund Act 127. Make no mistake, the basic concept of Act 127 makes perfect sense: It costs more to educate some students than others. The flaw is in the implementation that this could be funded as revenue neutral legislation. It assumed that the school districts not identified by Act 127 have been overspending to educate their students. Nothing could be further from the truth. I submit that school boards have been conscientious with their budget development processes in balancing taxpayer burdens against the educational needs of their students. There is no money to cut and maintain current education levels.

Act 127 identified an additional need in our current education funding model. It needs to identify an additional source for the money needed to meet this need rather than assuming money can be shifted around.

Today Rep. Kornheiser suggested that cutting school budgets doesn't imply cutting staff. This is a perfect indication of how out of touch the Legislature is with the school budget development process. The bulk of the school budget controlled at the local level involves staffing. Any reduction in budget will require a reduction in staffing.

I urge you to STOP trying to fix the fundamentally flawed funding implementation of Act 127 funding and pursue the identification of other funding sources such as increasing the state sales tax rate or creating a new tax category for second homes and increasing that property tax rate.

Feel free to contact me at 802-279-4208 if you wish to discuss this further.

Respectfully submitted,
Alan Ouellette
Stowe resident and member of the Stowe School Board