

Superintendent Randy Dorn offers his own school funding plan

By JORDAN SCHRADER

Staff writer

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Washington state Superintendent of Public Instruction Randy Dorn listens to a question, Wednesday, Feb. 2, 2011 from the Senate Education Committee at the Capitol in Olympia, Wash. (AP Photo)

TED S. WARREN — AP

State lawmakers face a deadline of April 30 to report to the state Supreme Court on their plan for fully funding basic education by 2018. Now state schools chief Randy Dorn is suggesting what the report should say.

The elected state superintendent of public instruction on Monday proposed an ambitious \$6.7 billion plan.

That is likely to represent the upper bound of what [lawmakers' plan -- or plans, if they can't agree](#) -- might look like. Legislative staff has estimated at least an additional \$3.5 billion is needed.

Dorn's plan includes pay raises for school employees, accounting for more than \$3 billion of the total price tag. It calls for hiring more employees, including to reduce class size in all grades.

Those are on top of the areas where lawmakers have already promised increased funding and where they targeted the first \$1 billion of their additions. Those areas include school operations, supplies and buses, full-day kindergarten and smaller classes in the lower grades.

The Supreme Court said in the McCleary decision that the Legislature hasn't fulfilled its constitutional mandate to amply fund K-12 education.

Dorn recommended how to phase in each category. If lawmakers were to use his plan, they would have to add \$3.5 billion in time for the start of the 2015 school year, including \$2.2 billion for pay increases alone.

His proposal on pay is based on work by a task force that compared employee compensation to market rates. For example, the proposal says teachers and other instructional staff make an average of \$53,280 from the state, not counting local add-ons, compared to a market rate of \$61,498.

The extra state money for salaries would replace part of the add-on amounts paid for by local levies, according to Dorn's plan, which would forbid districts from raising salaries more than 10 percent higher than state levels.

Overall, Dorn's plan calls for local levy rates to be lowered in proportion to the extra state money. The lid on levies, currently 28 percent or higher for some districts, would drop to 15 percent.

Read more here: <http://www.theolympian.com/2014/04/22/3097635/superintendent-randy-dorn-offers.html#storylink=cpy>