

Educating and Engaging the Community Voice about Equalization

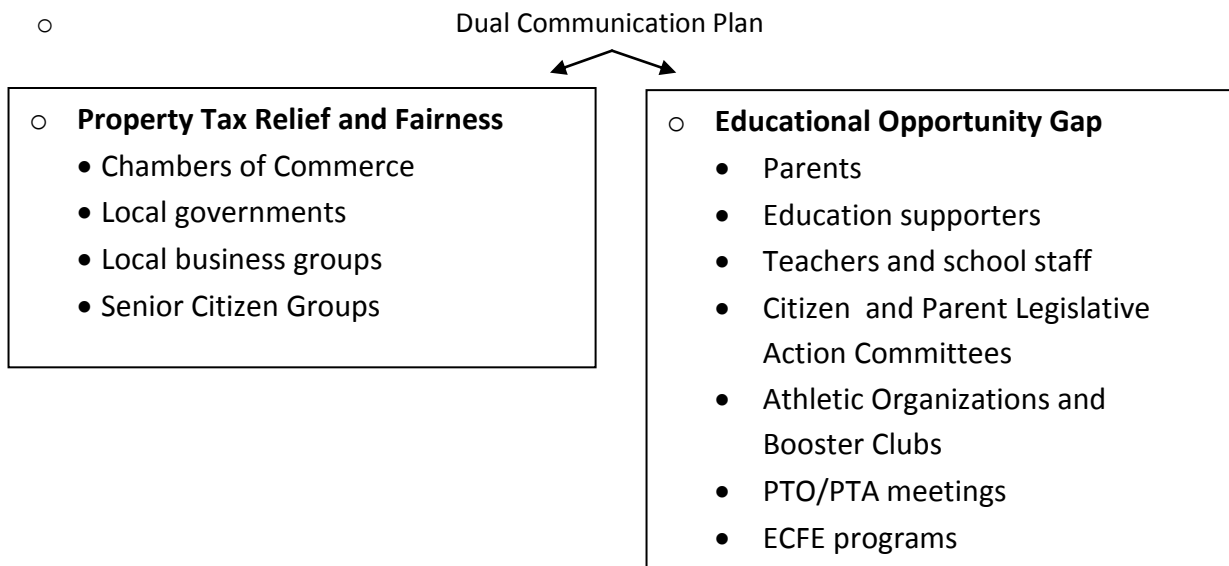
Superintendents and school board members are instrumental in bringing the message that the current reliance on local school levies has resulted in an unfair property tax system and alarming educational opportunity gaps. SEE is excited to roll-out a new video along with a communication package to help educate stakeholders on the need for increased equalization. Regardless of which party is in control of the Legislature, property tax relief will be a hot topic during the 2013 Legislative Session. We must all work together to ensure that equalization is part of the discussion.

- Goal for the video and support package
 - Impact 2013 legislation by engaging the powerful voice of community members and empower them to contact their legislators to ask for increased equalization.
 - Have community members sign up at www.schoolsforequity.org to receive weekly legislative updates and action alerts from SEE.
 - Ensure that community members are educated, engaged and empowered to contact their legislators at critical time during the legislative session.
- Simple ways to bring the equalization information to the community.
 - Show video at school district board meetings.
 - Add video to school district websites.
 - Write letters to the editor in local newspapers using SEE talking points as a guide.
 - Incorporate the SEE talking points into other school communications.

Hierarchy of Effective Communication

1. Face to Face contact
2. Small group discussion or meeting
3. Speaking before a large group

- Identify key groups in your community to more effectively communicate with. Either property tax fairness or educational opportunity gap can be emphasized depending on the group.



Action Plan

- Following are ways to bring the taxpayer fairness and the opportunity gap message to key groups.
 - Show the video in meetings that you typically have with key community groups regarding your school district. If you are using a PowerPoint presentation, incorporate pertinent slides from the SEE PowerPoint presentation.
 - Set up additional meetings to meet with key groups.
 - Superintendent or school board members can host the meeting and utilize the video and the prepared SEE presentation.
 - SEE staff - Deb Griffiths or Brad Lundell- would be happy to come out to give the presentation.
 - Deb Griffiths also has a longer Education Funding 101 presentation that incorporates the tax fairness and educational opportunity gap issues. This would be a good presentation for key community groups to hear as well.
 - Research indicates that school staff - especially custodians, secretaries, bus drivers and food service workers - are the most believed sources of information about our schools. Your community listens to these people! All staff should see the video and hear the supporting documentation.
 - Superintendents can share this information with all district staff.
 - Deb Griffiths could train principals so they can disseminate this information not only to all school staff but also to parents groups such as PTA/PTO's.
 - Discuss this issue in all conversations with key individuals or groups in your district.
 - Recommend watching the SEE video for a clear description of the problem at www.schoolsforequity.org.
 - Recommend that stakeholders sign up at least for SEE's action alerts.