

COMPLY WITH THE PARAMOUNT DUTY

The 2017 Legislature made significant investments in basic education through EHB 2242 (McCleary Plan) and SSB 5883 (2017-2019 Budget). However, for districts in our region, actual costs are not fully covered. To fully comply with its constitutional mandate to provide ample funding, and the most recent Supreme Court ruling, the Legislature must address specific deficiencies of EHB 2242/SSB 5883, while also ensuring that no district loses funding as compared to current law. We respectfully request fixes for:

Special Education

Fund the actual costs of special education, including an update to the special education multiplier so districts can fully fund special education for all eligible students. Districts cannot rely on continued use of local levy funds to fully support special education programs.

Regionalization

EHB 2242's calculation methodology and application of regionalization factors has unintended consequences and should be improved. As written, it intensifies current district inequities, and forces competition for staff between neighboring districts.

Salary Allocations

The additional funds to support educator compensation do not cover actual salary or staffing costs. By eliminating the staff mix factor and instituting a new one-size-fits all statewide average salary allocation, districts with more experienced staff must use additional, limited revenue to retain educators. They may also be forced to hire less experienced staff, or make program cuts. Compensation funding must be enhanced to be both ample and equitable.

Levies

The significant variation in the levy limit of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of assessed value (plus LEA for a total of \$1,500 per student), compared to \$2,500 per student, will not solve funding inequities statewide. The Legislature must ensure that the implementation of this policy provides an equitable system of funding, one that does not exacerbate existing inequities.

SUPPORT SCHOOL FACILITIES

In 2017, over \$1.0 billion of school construction funding was left on the table following the failure to adopt a Capital Budget. The 2018 Legislature should enact a full Capital Budget in the first week of session. We also urge the Legislature to:

- Advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to be approved with a simple majority vote;
- Enhance the state's investment in K–12 construction by updating the current, outdated funding formulas for the Construction Cost Allowance and Student Space Allocation to ensure funding more closely reflects actual construction costs and full-day kindergarten, class size reduction requirements and technology needs.

EXPAND AVAILABLE STATE RESOURCES

The current state budget structure cannot accommodate both necessary increases in basic education to ensure ample funding for all K–12 children, and sufficient resources for other vital state programs. We support expanded state resources or a restructured tax system to ensure ample, sustainable, and equitable revenues to enable the Legislature to fully comply with its constitutional paramount duty. This is also necessary to prevent drastic reductions of other necessary government services – which would have significant impacts on K-12 education and disproportionately impact children and families of color and who are living in poverty.