

As superintendents of the Puget Sound region representing nearly 40% of students across Washington state, 53% of whom are students of color, our unwavering focus is on students. Our legislative priorities are aimed to create opportunities for each and every student to succeed in school and in life, and to eliminate opportunity gaps based on race, income and other factors that have historically disadvantaged young people.

We recognize that the Legislature has made progress in implementing a new funding system for K-12 education. The state must continue to adjust the funding system to match the policies it has set and to meet student needs today.

Update Staff Allocation Formulas

The need for student supports in local school districts has grown exponentially, yet the funding ratios for many staff positions in the prototypical school model have not kept up. In particular, schools need additional capacity to hire staff to support the social and emotional needs of students and to engage families in culturally relevant and authentic ways.

Proposed Solution: Phase in updated ratios, considering recommendations from the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup.

Special Education Funding

Prior to the 2019 session, OSPI identified a special education underfunded need of more than \$300 million. The 2019-21 budget provides \$80 million -- a much-needed investment in the safety net, yet far from full funding.

Proposed Solution: Increase the special education multiplier to make up for the full costs districts are required to incur.

Support School Facilities

Many districts continue to have difficulty passing local requests for, building, and maintaining modern school facilities.

Proposed Solution: Advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to be approved with a simple majority vote. Additionally, update the construction and space formulas to ensure funding more closely reflects actual costs and educational space needs.

School Employee Benefit (SEB) Impacts

The 2019 Legislature took action to fund and ratify the SEB Collective Bargaining Agreement, with the program beginning January 1, 2020. Unfortunately, the costs of the new benefit program and the state funding do not align. As the new insurance program is implemented, adjustments are needed to fund the full costs to school districts.

Proposed Solution: Align SEB policies and related funding including the costs of substitute/part-time employee eligibility and employees that opt-out of coverage.

Student and Staff Safety & Wellness

In 2019, the Legislature passed HB 1216, a hallmark school safety policy and the first of its kind in Washington state. The bill has formalized a comprehensive statewide, regionally-based delivery model that is coordinated with school staff, mental health practitioners, and other community professionals, such as emergency responders, to better ensure our schools receive timely, relevant and seamless health and safety supports. Although the legislature passed this policy, less than 25% of the activities required by HB 1216 were funded.

Proposed Solution: Fully fund the statewide school safety and student well-being network, regional school safety centers, and statewide support for behavioral health and suicide prevention.



STATE LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS 2020

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