



PRIORITY LEGISLATION FOR K-12 STUDENT SUCCESS

FOUR CRITICAL DISTRICT ISSUES

1. Health & Human Services Support for the Whole Child

In addition to academic needs met during the school day, many students—especially those from underserved communities—would benefit from free, enhanced learning opportunities before and after the school day. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Academic Excellence, Safety.

Proposed Solution: Allow for state-funded, priority grantmaking for school districts to contract with community partner agencies to provide supports and enhanced learning opportunities for youth from 3 to 6 p.m. and other non-school hours.

2. Prototypical school model funding modifications

The prototypical school model, upon which the state bases its funding allocations, does not adequately provide for the overall wraparound support required to help all students succeed. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Safety, Academic Excellence, Partnership, Early Learning.

Proposed Solution: Modify the prototypical school model as outlined by the Legislature in RCW 28A.150.260 and increase funding for support staff such as, but not limited to, McKinney-Vento (homeless) liaisons/social workers, psychologists (mental health), nurses (IEP supports), guidance counselors, custodians, teaching assistance, office support and non-instructional aides, security personnel and parent involvement coordinators—at least for high-poverty school districts whose students require additional support.

3. Special education fully funded by the state

The state does not fully fund the actual costs of special education through its existing education funding formula. Thus, districts are required to make up the difference through enrichment (local) levy funding. The legislature increased the special education funding factor in the 2019 legislative session, but that increase still does not fully fund the actual costs of the mandated special education services. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Academic Excellence, Early Learning.

Proposed Solution: Increase state funding for special education to a rate that fully funds the actual costs of special education as part of the state's obligation to fully fund basic education.

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Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is one of the largest districts in Washington State serving approximately 30,000 children in preschool through grade 12. The district has 35 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 10 high schools and 4 early learning centers. Eighteen schools are designated as innovative. TPS has nearly 5,000 employees and is one of the largest employers in Tacoma.

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4. School Employee Benefits Board

The legislature created the school employee benefits board (SEBB) to bring all school district employees into one statewide pool for health insurance and other employer benefits beginning with the 2019-20 school year. The state does not fully fund the incremental costs of the benefits for full- or part-time locally-funded employees, which means school districts must allocate enrichment (local) levy funding to cover the mandated costs

Proposed Solution: Increase state funding for school employee benefits to fully cover the incremental additional costs of this state-mandated employee benefit plan for all school district employees, including nearly 400 employees beyond the prototypical school model that districts fund through enrichment (local) levies.



ISSUES OF HIGH CONCERN

Simple majority for construction bonds to offer smaller class sizes, safer schools

School construction bond votes currently require a 60% supermajority to pass. This constitutional provision puts districts in jeopardy of being able to adequately provide sufficient, updated and safe instructional space for students at a time when the state is requiring smaller class sizes in grades K-3. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Safety, Academic Excellence.

Proposed Solution: Approve a constitutional amendment to be sent to the people allowing for a simple majority vote for school construction bonds.



Early learning funding

Tacoma School District provides expanded early learning opportunities to pre-kindergarten students in the district at nearly every elementary school. The program is funded through the enrichment (local) levy and is a key element of its overall education mission. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Partnership, Early Learning.

Proposed Solution: Increase state funding for early learning programs, including proposals to provide direct funding to school districts for early learning as well as proposals to allow districts to fund early learning programs through a dedicated early learning levy.

School construction formula modifications

The current school construction cost allocation program does not adequately reflect the true costs of school construction—with no meaningful increase in the funding formula since 2005 despite dramatic increases in construction costs. **Strategic Plan Alignment:** Safety, Academic Excellence.

Proposed Solution: Increase funding for both the area-cost allowance and the square-foot-per-student allocation for school construction.

