

LEGISLATIVE AGENDA

2022



FOUR CRITICAL DISTRICT ISSUES



Student Enrollment Funding Stability

The pandemic has presented an education-delivery challenge to our students and all school districts. The system has pivoted from a full in-person learning model to a fully online model and is now grappling with the return to in-person learning while the pandemic maintains its grip on society. School districts continue providing public education in some form to all students and our requires funding stability to continue doing this work.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Maintain school district funding based on the greater of the October 2019 enrollment count or the current count so that districts can maintain adequate instructional and support staffing throughout the year.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence*



Extended Learning Services Support for the Whole Child

In addition to the educational needs provided during the school day, many students—especially those from underserved communities—would benefit from free, enhanced extended learning opportunities before and after the school day.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Establish a robust system for expanded learning opportunities through sustainable funding and priority grantmaking opportunities for community partner agencies to provide student supports and enhanced learning opportunities for youth from 3 to 6 p.m. and other non-school hours. The program funding must allow for professional development of new and existing staff as well as local infrastructure support to grow throughout the Tacoma/Pierce County area.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence, Partnership, Early Learning*

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FOUR CRITICAL DISTRICT ISSUES - CONTINUED

3 Student Transportation Funding Formula Revisions

The student transportation funding formula does not provide full cost recovery for student transportation services. Districts must use enrichment (local) levy funding to pay the additional costs to meet their duty to transport students to and from school.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Revise the student transportation funding statute to fully cover the actual costs of student transportation. The formula must include all costs related to transportation employee benefits mandated by the state through the School Employee Benefits Board (SEBB).

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence*



4 Prototypical School Model Funding Update

The prototypical school model does not cover the full cost of providing a safe and robust learning environment for students. Every school district subsidizes state funding with enrichment (local) levy funding to provide the necessary number of support staff to address changing local student population needs, including wraparound support required to help all students succeed, as well as building maintenance enhancements now required by the COVID-19 pandemic.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Increase the funding for school support staff such as McKinney-Vento (homeless) liaisons/social workers, psychologists (mental health), nurses (IEP supports), custodians, security personnel, transportation services, and parent involvement coordinators.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Establish minimum operational maintenance (custodial, grounds, facilities) standards and fund staffing accordingly.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Safety, Academic Excellence, Partnership, Early Learning*



ISSUES OF HIGH CONCERN

Fully Fund Special Education

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 has increased the special education funding factor over the years but is still underfunding the actual costs of providing special education.

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.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence, Early Learning*

Maritime Skills Center

The current need to prepare the next generation of Maritime employees has never been higher. Maritime transport is the backbone of global trade and the global economy. The jobs and livelihoods of billions of people in the world depend on ships and shipping, much of it through the Northwest Seaport Alliance – a marine cargo partnership of the Port of Seattle and Port of Tacoma, making it the fourth-largest gateway in the United States. The need to prepare these employees and sustain Washington's competitive edge requires an integrated approach of high school and college-level curriculum that results in student attainment of relevant industry-recognized credentials, certifications, and job experience leading to in-demand family-wage careers.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Fund and support a competency-based Maritime Skills Center in the City of Tacoma to support South Sound area students.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence*



Regionalization Funding Reform

The legislature created a regionalization funding formula providing additional revenues for school districts in urban areas where costs of living are above the statewide average. The current formula is established around school district boundaries and leads to inequitable funding levels among school districts in the same metropolitan areas. For example, there are 4 separate regionalization funding levels offered to districts in the Auburn/Tacoma/Puyallup/Bethel area. This leads to a 20% funding disparity between those districts creating labor market distortions and competitive inequities.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Establish a labor-market regionalization funding mechanism statewide and eliminate the funding disparities among the districts in similar metropolitan areas.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence*

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, in Tacoma Public Schools, nearly 400 employees beyond the prototypical school model that districts fund through enrichment (local) levies.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence*

ISSUES OF HIGH CONCERN - CONTINUED



Enhanced Pedestrian Safety Initiative

The City of Tacoma is currently working on a legislative proposal to expand authorization for automated speed enforcement (speed cameras). Currently, speed cameras are only allowed in official school zones and on Bay Street near 509 in Tacoma. The new proposal would expand authorization for the entire walkshed around schools (one mile) as well as areas where there is a high number of collisions resulting in someone being killed or seriously injured.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Provide legislative authority to enhance speed enforcement tools to a broader area surrounding schools and in areas of higher than average vehicle and pedestrian accidents.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Safety, Partnership*

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.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: Increase state funding for both the area-cost allowance and the square-foot-per-student allocation for school construction.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Safety, Academic Excellence*

Simple Majority for Construction Bonds

School construction bond votes currently require a 60% supermajority to pass. This constitutional provision puts districts in jeopardy of being able to adequately provide updated and safe instructional space for students.

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

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Safety, Academic Excellence*

Dual Credit/College in the High School

Dual credit programs for high school students provide an important avenue to acquire college credits early, thereby saving on the costs of a higher education degree. The College in the High School program allows students to acquire those credits without having to travel to a separate college campus facility. However, the costs for the College in the High School program can be unattainable for many students—especially students farthest from economic and educational opportunities.

PROPOSED SOLUTION: The legislature should modify the College in the High School program to provide all students, regardless of income, the opportunity to acquire college credits while completing their secondary education.

Strategic Plan Alignment: *Academic Excellence, Partnerships*