



2024 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

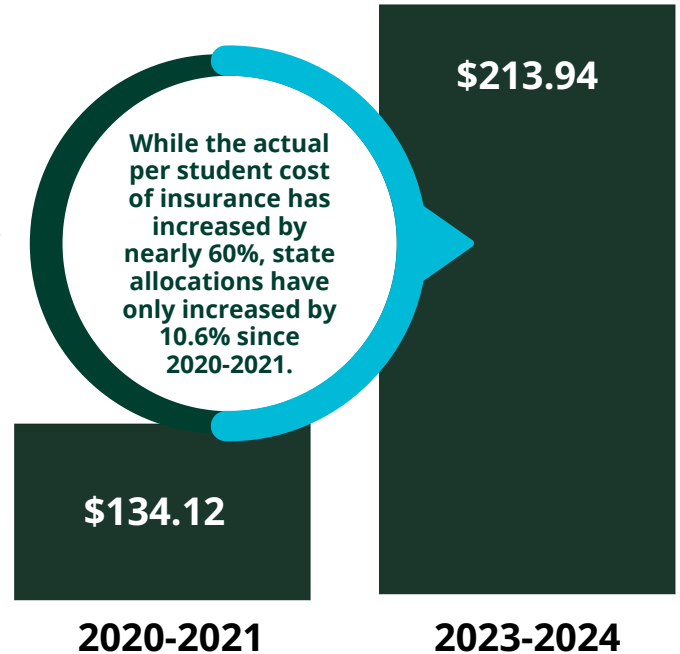
EDUCATIONAL SERVICE DISTRICT 105

Our students and their future success depend on the changes we make today to secure the funding they need. The superintendents of the 25 public school districts in south central Washington's ESD 105 region strongly recommend the following priorities toward maintaining a continuous and equitable system of public education in our state.

ADDRESS THE FUNDING GAP CAUSED BY INSUFFICIENT MSOC FUNDING AS A RESULT OF RISING INSURANCE RATES

ESD 105 urges legislators to address the pressing issue of our current funding model for maintenance, supplies, and operating costs (MSOC) in our school districts. The escalating costs of insurance and utilities have created a significant gap in the amount of funding districts are provided and their actual expenditures. Since the 2020-2021 school year, the per-student rate has seen an increase of nearly 60%, averaging close to 20% annually over the past four years. In stark contrast, MSOC reimbursements have only

grown by 10.6% during the same period, with a mere 2% increase from 2020-21 to 2021-22, 5.5% from 2021-22 to 2022-23, and 3.1% from 2022-23 to 2023-24. This discrepancy has eroded our districts' purchasing power and is affecting the quality of education we can offer to our students. We ask you to find a solution that ensures our schools receive the funding necessary to maintain a high standard of education.



2020-2021

2023-2024



SUPPORT CAPITAL FACILITIES

ESD 105 strongly urges our legislators to update construction formulas that no longer accurately reflect the reality of rising construction and materials costs. The current formulas are outdated and fail to address the significant inflation in the construction industry, hindering districts' abilities to build and maintain modern and safe learning environments. It is crucial that we address this issue to ensure our schools can provide the best possible learning environments and opportunities for our students to thrive and succeed. Additionally, we ask the Legislature to finally give Washington's citizens the opportunity to decide whether school district bond issues should be approved with a simple majority vote.



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UPDATE STAFF ALLOCATIONS

ESD 105 urges the Legislature to allocate funding based on the actual experience factor of the staff districts employ, opposed to an amount calculated based on state average. While research indicates that our most experienced, educated and highly capable teachers have a greater impact on student success, the current model of funding doesn't provide districts the financial resources to fund these educators. Providing an allocation based on an average years of experience creates additional barriers for districts, putting them in a position where hiring educators with less experience than their counterparts is favorable for creating sustainable budgets that are not heavily reliant on local levies.

We also ask that you fully fund school nurses and family engagement coordinators to better support our students' health and well-being and continue the implementation of the Phase I of the recommendations from the Staffing Enrichment Group (2019): improving staff allocations for school principals; providing additional professional development to close achievement gaps; and adding continuous improvement coaches as an enhancement to the Prototypical School Funding Model (PSFM).



FIX PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

Under STARS, the current Pupil Transportation funding model, many districts experience significant funding gaps. OFM recently found in most situations, the STARS model is not going to provide adequate resources to school districts and recommends, at the very least, that more funding be provided to the system. We appreciate the 2022 and 2023 Legislature's provision of additional funding to address excess costs to transport special passengers; however, it is time to comprehensively fix the pupil transportation formula to ensure it is more transparent, predictable, and adequately funded.



FULLY FUND SPECIAL EDUCATION

While the state has made an agreement to fully fund education, the current model for providing special education funding to our school districts is inadequate. We recognize the significant steps the Legislature has taken to reduce the special education funding gaps in recent sessions and thank you for this effort. Even with these increases in funding, school district expenditures for special education related services substantially exceed special education funding. We ask our 2024 Legislature to continue to take deliberate action to secure equitable practices for every student eligible under IDEA.



ADDRESS THE LEVY LID & INSTATE LEA HOLD HARMLESS PROVISION

It is imperative that the Legislature address the complexities surrounding the Washington State school levy lid. Many of our districts' communities have experienced quick and drastic increases in property value, resulting in a potential loss of anticipated levy equalization funds. This potential loss of funding implies devastating impacts on school districts, jeopardizing vital programs, educator positions, and the overall quality of education for our students. We request a hold-harmless provision for LEA to protect our districts from these decreases in funding.

