

2025 Legislative Priorities

from the Lakewood School Board



“It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders...”

Article IX, Section 1, Washington State
Constitution



The Lakewood School Board of Directors firmly believes that the 2025 Legislature must act this session to fulfill its obligation to Washington children. Without additional funding, meeting the needs of children in our state will become increasingly dependent on voters in local communities and lead to increasingly inequitable outcomes. Our own experience has led us to recommend three Legislative priorities.

Special Education

Lakewood School District has a legal and moral obligation to serve all students with disabilities in our district, regardless of the cost of those services. In the 2024-25 school year, 18% of students in Lakewood School District qualify for at least one special education service. The current funding model puts a cap on services at 16%. Furthermore, the services for those 16% of students are not fully funded. In the 2023-24 school year, Lakewood used about one-fifth of its EP&O levy to backfill services for special education that are not funded by the state. This reduces resources for other programs and services that our community has come to expect.

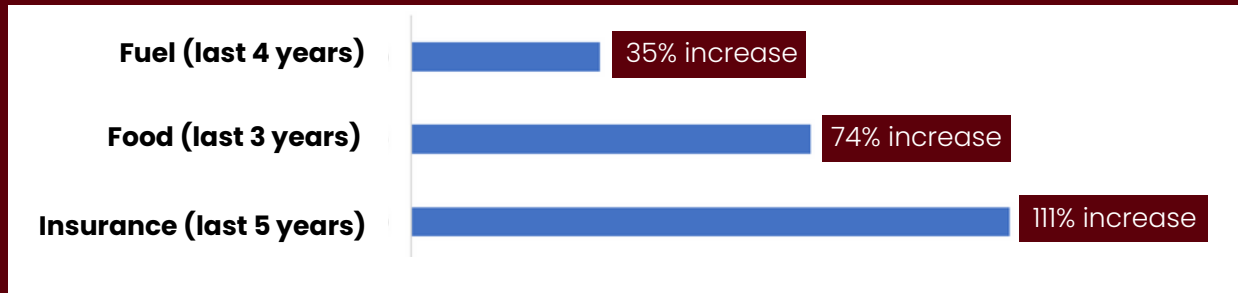
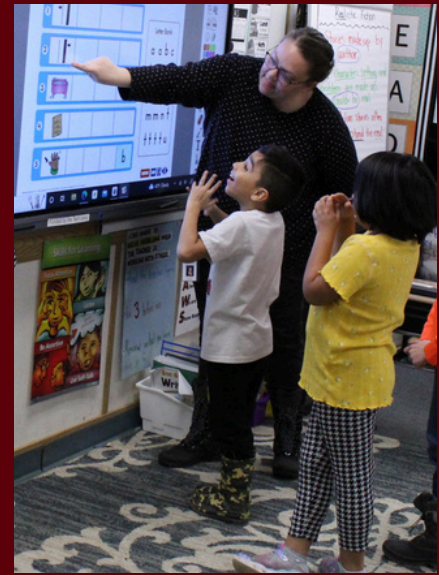


To ensure school districts are provided with funding that reflects the actual costs of service delivery, the Legislature must increase special education funding and remove the enrollment funding cap.

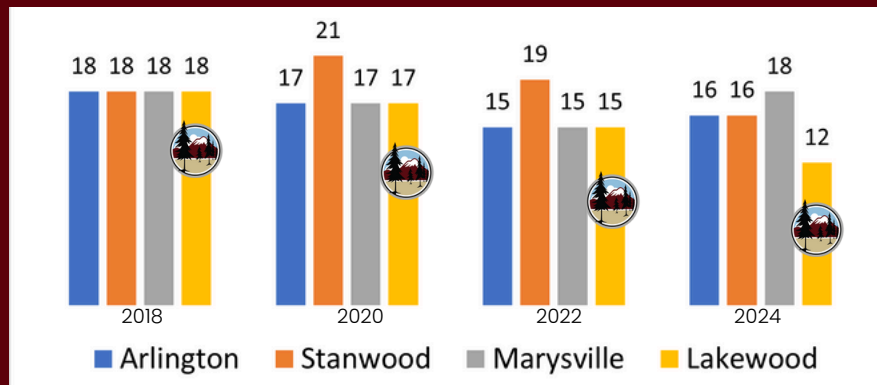
Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC)

Lakewood School Board urges legislators to fully fund allocations for Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC). While staffing represents the largest expense for Lakewood School District, there are many costs to running a school district which are non-staff related. While the Legislature provides an allocation to cover these MSOC costs at a specific rate per student, state funding for MSOC has not kept pace with actual school district costs.

We appreciate the increase that legislators provided for the 2023-24 school year. However, in context, the \$50,000 we received only put a small dent in the more than \$150,000 increase we spent on insurance premiums alone. When required costs of running our district exceed state funding, levies must be used to fill the gap, reducing local resources for community expectations.



Modify Regionalization/Experience Factor



The regionalization factor was originally designed to reflect a community's housing costs. Lakewood was assigned a regionalization factor of 18% in 2018-19. This was identical to regionalization received by our neighbors. In context, Lakewood School District does not have its own city government. District residents have home addresses of Marysville, Arlington and Stanwood. Since 2018-19, our regionalization factor has been reduced to 12%, while that of our neighbors is still 16% to 18%. This puts the burden on our community to pay for staff salaries through our local levy. Lakewood School District urges the Legislature to immediately revamp the methodology of regionalization and experience factors to ensure school districts receive consistent and equitable resources. The current regionalization methodology lacks transparency and has exacerbated inequities.