



# LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

2026

## Mission

*Committed to excellence: Preparing all students for rewarding careers, fulfilling lives, and compassionate global citizenship.*

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## Quick Facts

- 14,500+ students
- 4 choice schools
- 4 preschool locations
- 8 transitional kindergarten classrooms
- 3 dual language locations
- 100+ dual high school/college credit options
- 88 percent on-time graduation rate (5 percentage points higher than state average)
- 130+ National Board Certified Teachers

## Student-centered policy recommendations

The 2026 North Thurston Public Schools legislative priorities focus on ensuring all students have equitable access to continuous learning opportunities, quality programs, and future success.

### The 2026 Legislature must:

- **Fully Fund Special Education Services:** School districts are legally required to serve all students with disabilities, regardless of cost. While the \$300 million increase in the 2025–27 budget is appreciated, the statewide funding gap remains over \$1 billion. Districts continue to rely on local levies to meet these obligations, which undermines equity and sustainability.
- **Address the Underfunding of Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC):** MSOC allocations must be increased to reflect the true cost of operating schools. Per-pupil funding does not keep pace with inflation or rising costs for utilities, insurance, curriculum, and technology. The increase in the 2025–27 budget is a step forward, but districts still face a significant shortfall that forces them to divert local resources from other priorities.
- **Strengthen Staff Support:** The prototypical school funding model must be updated to reflect realistic staffing needs. Most staffing ratios have not changed since 2010, resulting in outdated and insufficient support. The Legislature should prioritize the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup’s 2019 recommendations, including improved teacher and principal staffing, as well as coaching and professional development support.
- **Fully Fund Substitute Costs:** The state should fully fund the cost of required staff leave. Current funding covers only a portion of certificated substitute costs and none for classified staff, leaving districts to fill the gap with local funds. Additionally, districts must provide sick leave to substitutes without corresponding state support, increasing the financial burden.
- **Invest in Early Learning:** Investing in high-quality early learning is essential to closing achievement gaps by third grade. The Legislature should consider a cost-sharing model that covers 25–50% of preschool costs, enabling more children to enter kindergarten ready to succeed and reducing the need for later interventions.



## All Students Empowered and Future-Ready

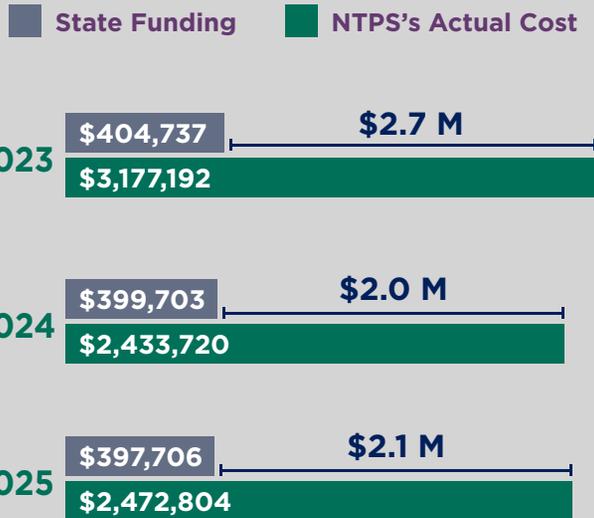
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# Gaps in State Funding



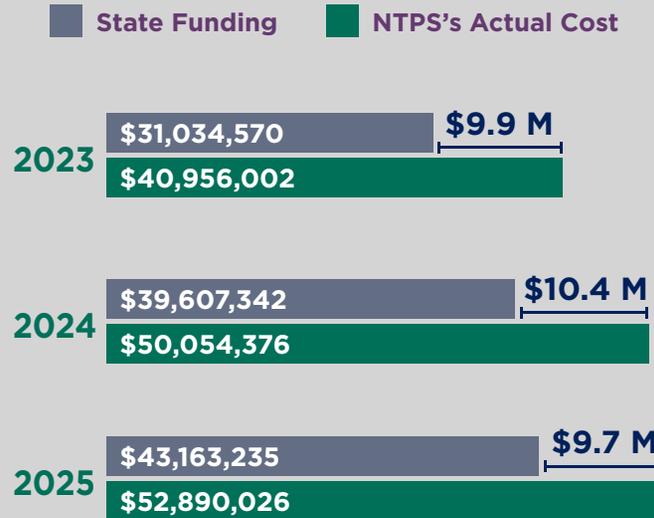
## Substitute Staff



Since 2023, NTPS has been underfunded for Substitute Staff by **\$6.8 million**



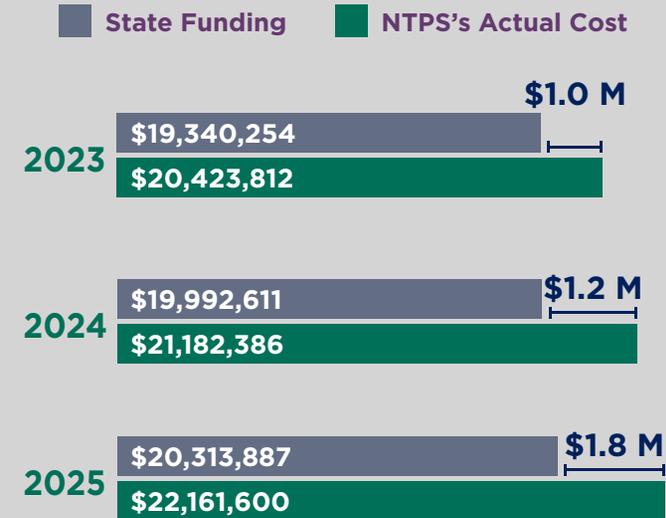
## Special Education



Since 2023, NTPS has been underfunded for Special Education by **\$30 million**



## MSOC (Materials, Supplies & Operating Costs)



Since 2023, NTPS has been underfunded for MSOC by **\$4 million**



**Since 2023, these gaps in state funding have cost NTPS \$40.8 million.**