

2026 PUGET SOUND REGIONAL DISTRICTS LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS

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Preamble

Washington's K-12 public education system is facing escalating financial pressures that threaten school districts' ability to sustain essential services for students. Inflationary cost increases, enrollment shifts, unfunded mandates, and structural limitations in the current funding system have created an unsustainable fiscal environment. Immediate legislative attention is required to uphold the State's constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education.

While we recognize the significant constraints of the state budget this legislative session, PSESD districts are advancing several no-cost or cost-saving legislative requests that would stabilize district finances and preserve resources for classrooms and student support.

Longer-term, Washington must undertake a comprehensive modernization of its K-12 funding framework. This effort must move beyond incremental adjustments and address the structural inequities that persist across districts. A redesigned system must include an explicit equity lens—aligning resources with student needs, community context, and the true costs of delivering a high-quality, safe, and inclusive educational experience.

PSESD and regional school districts stand ready to partner with the Legislature on both short-term stabilization and long-term reform to ensure a stronger, more equitable future for Washington's public schools.



2026 Cost-Savings & No-Cost Legislative Actions

Clean Buildings Standard Compliance Assistance

Districts are mandated to comply with the Washington Clean Buildings Act, yet no dedicated funding stream exists to support the substantial capital and operational upgrades required. Compliance without funding diverts resources away from educational services and increases long-term financial strain.

Proposed Action

Delay or exempt school districts from Clean Buildings Act compliance requirements until the Legislature identifies and appropriates a dedicated funding source to support required capital upgrades and technology improvements.

Public Records Requests Reform

School districts continue to experience significant administrative and financial burdens from overly broad, duplicative, or commercial-purpose public records requests, diverting staff resources from instruction and student support.

Proposed Action

Advance statutory changes to ensure the Public Records Act includes authority to manage overly burdensome, commercial, or abusive requests; clarified timelines and cost-recovery structures; and modernized digital records processes that reduce compliance complexity.

Sales Tax Exemption for Essential District Services

Recent legislative changes expanding sales taxes to service providers have resulted in significant new costs for school districts, particularly for temporary staffing, IT services, and student safety supports.

Proposed Action

Modify the sales tax on services statute to exempt education-related service contracts, including temporary staffing, information technology services, and student safety/security services.

Operating Budget

For 2026, the region prioritizes the following operating budget needs, with Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC) remaining the single highest investment priority.

Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC)

Rebase the MSOC funding factor to reflect actual statewide average costs, including inflationary adjustments necessary to maintain essential district operations.

Student Transportation

Establish a transportation safety-net funding mechanism to cover costs associated with McKinney-Vento students, special education routes, and other high-need transportation services.

Special Education

Increase the special education multiplier, raise or eliminate the funding cap, and address cost drivers associated with staffing, behavioral supports, and out-of-district placements.

Capital Budget

Simple Majority for School Construction Bonds

Advance a constitutional amendment allowing simple majority approval for school construction bonds.

Workforce Development Facilities

Increase capital funding for skills centers, CTE facilities, and specialized program spaces supporting high-demand industries.

School Construction Cost Formula Adjustments

Further increase the state match, area-cost allowance, and per-student square-foot allocation to reflect true construction and modernization costs.

Long-Term Legislative Priorities

A full modernization and redesign of Washington's K-12 funding system will require additional state investment and must include local levies and levy equalization support to ensure equitable distribution of resources.

Long-Term Request

Initiate a comprehensive redesign of the K-12 finance system grounded in an explicit equity lens—ensuring that system modernization advances educational justice and addresses longstanding resource disparities. This redesign should incorporate a needs-based funding framework calibrated to factors such as poverty, language acquisition, disability services, and community context, resulting in an equity-driven staffing model aligned with actual student and system needs.