

# WASA 2020 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

WASA believes that the commitment of resources to the education and welfare of the children of Washington State is an investment in the quality of our future. We believe that effective school leaders initiate and manage change resulting in a system of K-12 education in which all students receive a quality education.

School administrators recognize and appreciate the efforts of legislators to craft an updated education funding system to amply provide a program of basic education for every K-12 student in the state, in compliance with the state's constitutional "paramount duty." Over the last several years, the Legislature has made great strides in implementing and funding that new system, including significant investments that have doubled K-12 appropriations since the Supreme Court's 2012 *McCleary* decision—but more work is yet to be done. To that end, school administrators urge the 2020 Legislature to act upon the following priorities:

## Update Staff Allocation Formulas

In the 2011 transition to the Prototypical School Funding Model, original staffing allocations were funded at artificially low ratios based on historic staffing ratios that had been in place since the late 1980's to ensure the conversion was cost neutral. Since then, the need for student supports in local school districts has grown exponentially, yet the funding ratios for most staff positions have remained the same since the Model was first implemented. (Examples of current, impractical underfunding: current ratios for a Prototypical high school require 40,000 student FTEs to generate one FTE social worker and almost 86,000 FTEs to generate one FTE psychologist.) WASA urges the Legislature to begin phasing in updated ratios to achieve more realistic state-funded staffing levels.

## Define Teacher Duties and Expectations

Teachers are highly trained professionals, performing complex full-time work, compressed into a 180-day calendar—and following state funding enhancements and local collective bargaining in the last two years, teacher salaries have increased to competitive, market levels. WASA urges the Legislature to clearly define the minimum professional duties and expectations for teachers and not leave this to collective bargaining. The definition must explicitly state the professional responsibilities, time, and effort required to provide the state's statutory program of basic education exceeds the required number of instructional hours and includes such things as: preparing, planning, and coordinating instruction; collaboration with other teachers or staff; meeting with parents; and evaluating student learning. Supplemental contracts should still be allowed; however, additional compensation must be tied to defined extra time or responsibilities that are uniquely associated with a specific assignment above and beyond the tasks of all other teachers.

## Provide Consistent, Equitable, and Ample Education Resources

To address continued concerns of underfunding and inequities, WASA urges the Legislature to revise portions of the new education funding structure, including:

- **Special Education.** Prior to the 2019 Session, OSPI identified a special education underfunded need of at least \$300 million—up to as much as \$400 million. The 2019–21 budget provides needed investments in the special education safety net; however, additional funding for an increase in the special education multiplier is less than \$80 million. The 2020 Legislature must provide additional funding to eliminate the current underfunding.
- **Salary Allocations and State Schedule.** The state Salary Allocation Model and the staff mix factor have been eliminated and replaced with a new one-size-fits-all statewide average salary allocation. To address inequities, a new "Experience Factor" was adopted in 2018, but only assisted 56 districts. To further lessen inequities, the Legislature needs to expand Experience Factor eligibility.
- **School Employees' Benefits Board.** The 2019 Legislature took action to fund and ratify the SEBB Collective Bargaining Agreement, with the program beginning January 1, 2020. As the new insurance program is implemented, adjustments are needed to fund the unsustainable costs to school districts. (Requested fixes include: clarifying substitutes are not benefit-eligible; and eliminating school districts' required payments for employees who opt-out of coverage.)
- **Regionalization.** Regionalization factors, as implemented in EHB 2242 (2017), intensify inequities and pit districts against one another. The calculation of regionalization and application of regionalization factors must continue to be evaluated and corrected.

## Support School Facilities

WASA urges the Legislature to: give Washington's citizens the opportunity to decide whether school district bond issues should be approved with a simple majority vote; enhance the state's investment in K-12 construction by updating the current, outdated funding formulas for the Construction Cost Allowance and Student Space Allocation to ensure funding more closely reflects actual construction costs and educational space needs; and provide school districts that have difficulty passing local bonds with capital funds to support necessary new construction or modernization.

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WASA is a statewide organization representing 1,800 active and retired public school superintendents and administrators.