Legislators provided an increase in basic education funding in the 2013–15 Operating Budget. They should be thanked for taking an initial step to complying with the Supreme Court’s orders in the McCleary decision. The enhancement provided was not as significant a down payment as expected, however. Additionally, legislators made a number of policy decisions that complicate the implementation of the new funding. A budget pivot table was prepared by OSPI which compares funding from the 2008-09 school year (when the McCleary lawsuit was heard and the year ESHB 2261 was adopted) to the current 2013-14 school year to help us provide better data to tell our story. The following Talking Points were developed to accompany the budget comparison tool to assist the education community in addressing the budget package with a consistent message.

- **Legislators claim the 2013–15 Operating Budget includes a “$1 billion” basic education enhancement.** In reality, the $982 million increase is significantly less when basic education reductions (e.g., I-732 COLAs) and budget “restorations” (e.g., salary restoration) are taken into account. The funding enhancement in this budget also fails to take into account the billions of dollars in reductions K–12 has taken over the last several years. Comparing SY 2013–14 funding to SY 2008–09 (when the McCleary case was heard in Superior Court), there is an increase of just $151 million—and the funding per pupil is $45 less.

- **Enhanced basic education funding lacks flexibility and/or includes “strings.”** ESHB 2261 (2009) and SHB 2776 (2010) specify the new basic education funding model is for “allocation purposes only,” yet the 2013–15 Operating Budget specifically directs how some of the enhancement must be used (e.g., K–1 Class Size Reduction funds are contingent on “demonstrated actual average class sizes”). Additionally, some of the enhanced funding is overly restrictive (e.g., LAP funding, previously flexible, must be used on “evidence-based” interventions and are required to be prioritized on early-grade reading proficiency).

- **State funding enhancements require additional unfunded expenditures of local resources.** Funds to hire staff do not fully account for the full cost of salary, benefits or increases in pensions, and the enhancements fail to fully cover the cost of additional text books, materials, or technology. Additionally, funds for All Day Kindergarten and K–1 Class Size Reduction do not account for necessary capital costs.

- **Basic education enhancements require expenditures for additional and/or upgraded facilities, but no additional funding is provided or contemplated.** Expansion of full day kindergarten and the reduction of class sizes each require additional facility space.

- **The Legislature’s 2013–15 budget solution is not sustainable, jeopardizing the ability to fully fund basic education by 2018.** To fully comply with the constitutional paramount duty by 2018, as directed by the Supreme Court in the McCleary decision, exponential increases in basic education funding will be necessary. The current short-term budget decisions made by legislators will not meet K–12 education’s funding need. An overhaul of the state’s current tax system and/or additional revenues will be required.