

2018 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

COMPLY WITH THE PARAMOUNT DUTY

The additional investments in basic education provided by the 2017 Legislature through EHB 2242 (*McCleary* Plan) and SSB 5883 (2017–19 Budget) are appreciated; however, those enhancements do not fully fund the actual cost to school districts to offer an appropriate basic education program for all Washington school children. The funding is not ample, as required by the constitutional “paramount duty,” and WASA believes the Legislature should continue to be held accountable for meeting this obligation.

To fully comply with its constitutional mandate, the 2018 Legislature must address specific deficiencies of EHB 2242/SSB 5883, including:

- **Special Education.** While additional funding is provided for special education, there was no increase in per student funding (i.e., the excess cost multiplier), which will continue to force many districts to use limited local levy funds to backfill the state’s funding gap.
- **Salary Allocations and State Schedule.** Additional funds are also provided to support educator compensation; however, that enhancement is still not enough to fund actual salary or staffing costs. Instead, EHB 2242 institutes a new one-size-fits-all statewide average salary allocation, while eliminating an essential equity funding mechanism: the staff mix factor. Districts with more experienced staff will be forced to raise additional (albeit limited) revenue to retain those educators or be forced to discriminate against more senior staff in hiring decisions—or make program cuts. Compensation funding is neither ample nor equitable.
- **Levies.** EHB 2242 exacerbates current inequities between districts by capping levy authority of property rich districts at the lesser of \$1.50/\$1,000 AV or \$2,500 per student, while levy authority of neighboring property poor districts is capped at a much lower \$1,500 per student—including state-funded Local Effort Assistance.
- **Regionalization.** EHB 2242’s calculation methodology and application of regionalization factors intensifies current district inequities, forcing needless competition for staff between neighboring districts.

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.

SUPPORT SCHOOL FACILITIES

In 2017, over \$1.0 billion of school construction funding was left on the table following the failure to adopt a Capital Budget. The first priority of the 2018 Legislature should be to enact a full Capital Budget. WASA also urges the Legislature to: advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to 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.

EXPAND AVAILABLE STATE RESOURCES

The current state budget structure cannot accommodate both necessary increases in basic education to ensure ample funding for all K–12 children, and sufficient resources for other vital state programs. WASA supports expanded state resources or a restructured tax system to ensure ample, sustainable, and equitable revenues to enable the Legislature to fully comply with its constitutional paramount duty and also prevent drastic reductions of other necessary government services—which would have significant impacts on K–12 education.

*Approved by the WASA Legislation and Finance Committee 9/11/2017
Approved by the WASA Board of Directors 10/9/2017*