

SCHOOL FUNDING COALITION | 2023 Legislative Priorities

School Funding Coalition

The School Funding Coalition is comprised of seven statewide education associations, representing almost 8,000 school district leaders from our state's 295 school districts. We bring a front-line understanding of school district financing and education funding issues. This Coalition convened to speak with one voice on common funding priorities that each of our associations will support on behalf of the 1.1 million students who attend our schools.

The Coalition urges the 2023 Legislature to:

Continue updating state-funded staffing ratios in the Prototypical School Funding Model by improving support for school principals; and support closing persistent opportunity gaps by funding additional professional development and continuous improvement coaches.

Prototypical School Funding Model

The Legislature adopted a new education funding system in 2009, establishing a distribution formula based on minimum staffing in "prototypical schools." Legislation adopted in 2010 implemented the new Prototypical School Funding Model (PSFM), providing new staffing allocations. The new allocations were intended to translate then-current levels of funding into the different staff classifications in the PSFM, with no adjustments, to ensure the conversion was cost neutral. Funding levels for most staff positions have remained the same since the Model was first implemented.

Coalition Long-Term Priority

In 2014, Washington's citizens approved Initiative 1351 which, among other things, provided for phased-in increases in staffing allocations in the PSFM. The Initiative required funding for increased staffing allocations to begin in the 2015-17 biennium, with full funding by the end of the 2017-19 biennium. Legislation adopted in 2015, however, delayed the funding of I-1351 by four years. In 2017, as a part of the "McCleary solution," the I-1351 implementation schedule was repealed. OSPI, however, was charged with convening a working group to review staffing allocations detailed in I-1351 and make recommendations on a possible phase-in plan of staffing enhancements.

At the end of 2019, the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup submitted its report to the Legislature, recommending a six-year phase-in of staffing enhancements in the PSFM, mirroring the values adopted in I-1351. The long-term priority of the School Funding Coalition is for the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup's recommendations to be adopted and funded by the Legislature, ensuring more realistic state-funded staffing levels.

2023 Legislative Priority of the Coalition

Members of the School Funding Coalition applaud the 2022 Legislature for beginning a phase-in of enhanced staff allocations, specifically investing in staff to meet students' needs for social, emotional, safety, and behavioral health. This action implements a portion of the Phase I recommendations of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup. In 2023, the Coalition urges the Legislature to continue the implementation of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup Phase I recommendations by improving Prototypical funding levels for school principals to support students and address increased responsibilities in supervisory duties; providing additional professional development to close achievement gaps; and adding continuous improvement coaches as an enhancement to the Prototypical School Funding Model.

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