



PRIORITY LEGISLATION FOR K-12 STUDENT SUCCESS

CRITICAL DISTRICT ISSUES

Equalize local funding authority for all school districts

Current enrichment levy rates are established at the lesser of \$1.50 per \$1,000 of school district property values, or \$2,500 per student. This formula creates inequities among districts where lower property value districts are subject to the \$1,500 per student rate and higher property value districts are allowed to collect up to \$2,500 per student.

Proposed Solution: Increase the enrichment (local) levy rate to at least \$2,500 per student to provide equal funding on a per student basis among all school districts. Let local voters decide to invest in their neighborhood schools through levy dollars.

Simple majority for construction bonds to offer smaller class sizes, safer schools

School construction bond votes currently require a 60% supermajority to pass. This constitutional provision puts districts in jeopardy of being able to adequately provide sufficient, updated and safe instructional space for students at a time when the state is requiring smaller class sizes in grades K-3.

Proposed Solution: Approve a constitutional amendment to be sent to the people allowing for a simple majority vote for school construction bonds.

Special education fully funded by the state

The state does not fully fund the actual costs of special education through its existing education funding formula. Thus, districts are required to make up the difference through enrichment (local) levy funding, which is being reduced in 2019. The legislature increased the special education funding factor in the 2018 legislative session, but that increase still does not fully fund the actual costs of special education.

Proposed Solution: Increase state funding for special education to a rate that fully funds the actual costs of special education as part of the state's obligation to fully fund basic education.

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Tacoma Public Schools (TPS) is one of the largest districts in Washington State serving approximately 30,000 children in preschool through grade 12. The district has 35 elementary schools, 10 middle schools, 10 high schools and 4 early learning centers. 17 schools are designated as innovative, with our eighteenth opening in the fall. TPS has nearly 5,000 employees and is one of the largest employers in Tacoma.

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ISSUES OF HIGH CONCERN

Regionalization factor for salaries

The legislature established supplemental regionalized funding for school districts based on a housing cost factor that does not account for the reality of an area-wide workforce.

Proposed Solution: Modify the regionalization factor to provide enhanced funding based on an area-wide workforce model rather than the current district-by-district formula.

Prototypical school model funding modifications

The prototypical school model, upon which the state bases its funding allocations, does not adequately provide for the overall wraparound support required to help all students succeed.

Proposed Solution: Modify the prototypical school model outlined by the Superintendent of Public Instruction and increase the funding for school support staff such as nurses, custodians, social workers, security personnel and parent involvement coordinators—at least for high-poverty school districts whose students require additional support.

K-3 class size funding flexibility

The K-3 class size funding formula does not take into account the lack of actual classroom space to achieve its goal of lowering actual classroom student counts to 17-to-1.

Proposed Solution: Clarify the current K-3 class size formula as an allocation model, rather than a compliance model, to allow flexibility in achieving the student-to-teacher ratio in the lower grades.

Institutional education costs

Certain school districts, including Tacoma School District, are responsible for providing and paying a large share of institutional education services at the regional juvenile detention centers.

Proposed Solution: Full funding by the state of all institutional education costs, thus removing the additional costs for this responsibility from enrichment (local) levy funding sources.

School Employee Benefits Board

The legislature created the school employee benefits board (SEBB) to bring all school district employees into one statewide pool for health insurance and other employer benefits beginning with the 2019-20 school year. The current proposal for coverage does not address funding for the additional employees hired by school districts through enrichment (local) levy funding. In addition, the proposed costs per employee exceed the projections when the plan was adopted.

Proposed Solution: The state fully cover the costs of this state-mandated employee benefit plan for all school district employees, including those employees funded through enrichment (local) levies.

Early learning funding

Tacoma School District provides expanded early learning opportunities to pre-kindergarten students in the district at nearly every elementary school. The program is funded through the enrichment (local) levy and is a key element of its overall education mission.

Proposed Solution: The state increase funding for early learning programs, including proposals to provide direct funding to school districts for early learning as well as proposals to allow districts to fund early learning programs through a dedicated early learning levy.

School construction formula modifications

The current school construction cost allocation program does not adequately reflect the true costs of school construction—with no meaningful increase in the funding formula since 2005 despite dramatic increases in construction costs.

Proposed Solution: Increase funding for both the area-cost allowance and the square-foot-perstudent allocation for school construction.

