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WASA is a statewide organization representing 1,600 active and retired public school superintendents and administrators.

# 2017 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.

## Comply with the Paramount Duty

WASA believes the Legislature should continue to be held accountable for complying with its constitutional “paramount duty” to provide ample funding for all K–12 children by implementing the new basic education finance system as adopted in both ESHB 2261 (2009) and SHB 2776 (2010). To ensure the new system is completely implemented—with full and equitable funding—as consistently ordered by the Supreme Court in *McCleary v. State*, the 2017 Legislature must act now to provide ample funding for basic education.

## Expand Available State Resources

The current state budget structure cannot accommodate the required increases in basic education to comply with the Supreme Court’s *McCleary* decision, nor allow the state to address educator compensation or capital costs in a comprehensive way. WASA supports the enhancement of state revenues to ensure the Legislature is able to fully comply with its constitutional paramount duty with “regular and dependable” sources of funding and also prevent drastic reductions of other necessary government services—which would have significant impacts on K–12 education.

## Ensure Competitive Public School Employee Compensation

WASA urges the Legislature to fully fund a competitive compensation system to ensure the state not only meets its responsibility to establish an equitable and ample allocation system, but maintains the present pension offerings and provides competitive benefits. Additionally, funding of the prototypical school funding model must ensure appropriate resources are provided to hire sufficient numbers of support staff, including paraeducators, school nurses, guidance counselors, and safety personnel. The 2017 Legislature must promptly act to prevent the approaching “levy cliff” by addressing the state’s obligation to adequately fund educator salaries, ending the unconstitutional overreliance on local levies. Current basic education labor costs must be funded first, before any potential reduction of local levies; however, any proposal to fund compensation that simply “swaps” state and local property tax authority without providing new state funding will not work and cannot be supported.

## Enhance School Construction Assistance

To ensure all school districts have the resources to secure additional facility space necessary to accommodate all-day kindergarten and K–3 class size reduction, WASA 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 a significant increase in capital funds to assist school districts with necessary new construction or modernization.

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