

WSSDA, WASA, AWSP, WEA and PSE of WA
Statement on Shared Funding Priorities for the 2007 Legislative Session

Funding Crisis

Five of Washington's largest education associations (WSSDA, WASA, AWSP, WEA and PSE of WA) agree that there is an education funding crisis in our state. We are all deeply concerned that Washington Learns did not address its main legislative charge to "develop recommendations about how the state can best provide stable funding for student learning." (E2SSB 5441 Sec. 3.1.d)

That said, we are encouraged by the budget proposal put forth by Gov. Gregoire. To bolster support for this approach during the 2007 session, our organizations agree to strategically engage in the legislative budget-writing process in order to bring about significant increases in per-pupil expenditures this upcoming session. While each organization has its own comprehensive legislative agenda, we share goals that reflect a common interest to immediately and significantly improve school funding. Also, we recognize that there may be nuanced positions to address our distinct member interests.

Fully Fund the 1993 Definition of Basic Education

The stakeholders named in this document agree to focus organizational efforts to persuade the Legislature to fully fund the 1993 definition of basic education within six years, beginning with the 2007–09 biennium by meaningfully increasing the basic education allocation. This will result, for example, in increased financial support for special education and transportation.

In addition, the state should make a significant down payment in the following strategic state investments: class-size reduction beyond I-728 funds, base salary increase for all K–12 staff, and full-day kindergarten statewide.

New Funding Formula

Our goal is to move Washington state considerably above the national average in per-pupil funding. (We are currently 42nd in the nation.) In order to do so, work must begin on a new funding formula that will provide ample resources to educate Washington's children for the 21st century. The new formula should not rely on the piecemeal approach of funding demonstration projects. We believe narrowly defined outcomes are ill-suited to inform a new allocation formula. We also believe such an approach shortchanges our schools, which are already suffering from severe and systemic under funding.

Our five associations, representing school boards, superintendents, principals, teachers and support staff, know what is needed to strengthen student achievement—*the resources to get the job done right*. Comprehensive funding relief for K–12 education is long overdue. The state needs to take action now to meet its constitutional obligation to fully fund the 1993 definition of basic education. It also must move forward expeditiously to develop a new funding formula that supports our standards-based education system. Our students cannot afford to wait.