

**Testimony by Linda Hanson, WSPTA President
Joint Hearing - Governor's Budget - January 29, 2007**

Thank you, Senator McAuliffe and Committee Members for this opportunity to speak with you today. My name is Linda Hanson, and I serve as the President of the WSPTA. Our membership is 150,000 parents, teachers, and community members advocating for children.

WSPTA applauds the Governor's courage, commitment, and vision to improve Washington's education system. The Governor's personal involvement in this issue is allowing a level of conversation we have not had before. We have now reached a tipping point and it is time to make the needed changes, and now.

Please allow me to address the priorities of WSPTA as they align with the budget before you.

K-12 Education's basic education goals - This bill adds language to the basic education act as follows: "and to develop a public school system that focuses more on the educational performance of students and includes high expectations for all students." We want to emphasize our number one priority here: We support legislation and policies that establish an updated definition of basic education *and* a basic education funding formula that reflects *current* education practices and requirements. This is the 21st century and we must prepare our students for the global economy we all talk about. The redefinition and funding formula must fulfill the State's obligation to fully fund education as its paramount duty by providing ample opportunities for all students to achieve higher learning levels consistent with standards-based education reform. The funding system must ensure accountability by generating consistent and transparent accounting processes.

Math and Science Programs - This proposal also provides support for after-school math support programs, math and science instructional coaches and educator preparation and professional development in math and science. PTA supports these efforts and will support legislation and policies that strengthen scientific and mathematical education in Washington State, including but not limited to enhanced pre-K through college education in mathematics and the sciences; advance professional development and ongoing assistance for math and science teachers, community involvement in the selection of math and science curricula, and family collaboration in teaching math and science.

Higher Education - With respect to higher education, PTA also supports any efforts the Governor proposes to improve access for all students: increasing enrollment slots, providing more grants and scholarships, and limiting tuition increases.

In closing, we respect the difficult decisions you have before you – our children deserve nothing less than the best. WSPTA stands ready to assist in creating a seamless education system, early learning through higher ed so each and every child has the opportunity for success.