



It is time to keep the promise made to the children of Washington state in the McCleary decision by fulfilling Washington state's paramount duty to amplify fund basic education. Funding solutions must be progressive revenue sources that are sufficient, sustainable and equitable, and must not cut services that support the whole child, or rely only on redistributing existing education funds.

Background

In its November 15, 2017 order, the Washington Supreme Court declared that the state had satisfied the court's mandate to provide basic education funding for the operational costs of the transportation formula, MSOC (materials, supplies and operating costs), all-day kindergarten, smaller K-3 class sizes, and student categorical programs.¹ The court also said that it wasn't necessary to fund actual costs², and that experience would be the judge of whether the funding proves adequate.¹

Proposed Solutions

WSPTA thanks the court for continuing to retain jurisdiction, and is advocating for four areas of specific relief during the 2018 legislative session:

- 1. Increase funding to close the gap between state funding for special education and actual district costs.** While the 2017 legislature lifted the cap on the percentage of student population that will be funded by the state³, under federal law, school districts must serve every student who enrolls in their schools. Funding gaps continue to exist and there are new limits on local levy use. Parents expect their students with special needs to receive necessary services to support their student's capabilities and achieve outcomes of academic success and civic engagement.⁴
- 2. Fund capital costs to ensure construction of classrooms to meet state policies of all-day kindergarten and smaller K-3 class sizes.** It was a state policy mandate to provide all-day kindergarten⁵. EHB 2242 also requires districts to meet the 17:1 class size ratios by the 2018-19 school year to receive the "operational funding" for K-3 class size reduction.⁵ 2ESSB 6080(2015)⁶ envisioned three biennia of grant funding to eligible school districts to pay for the smaller class size and all-day kindergarten policy change, which created the need for additional classrooms. The 2015-17 capital budget included \$234 million, but the 2017-19 capital budget does not include a second round of grant funding, leaving more than 70 districts with an anticipated \$230 million in additional costs to meet the ratio of 17:1. This will harm students who will remain in crowded classrooms and who will not receive the additional operational funding.⁷
- 3. Address the inequitable levy limits.** EHB 2242 both placed constraints on how local levy money can be spent and capped local levies at the lesser of \$1.50/\$1000 assessed value or \$2500/student (or Local Effort Assistance at \$1500/student).³ These arbitrary caps have led to huge inequities in the abilities of school districts to support enrichment activities.⁸
- 4. Create a comprehensive "hold harmless" in the wake of EHB 2242, whereby no school district would receive less funding through state or local revenues.** The legislature created a "hold harmless" for teacher salaries, but there is no hold harmless backed up by real dollars in the biennial budget for all funding changes³. Many school districts are projecting significant gaps between what they formerly received from local levies and what the state has provided under EHB 2242. Funding for our students and schools should not be going backward.⁹

For More Information

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Citations

1. Washington Supreme Court Order No. 84362-7, p. 37.
2. Washington Supreme Court Order No. 84362-7, p. 28.
3. HB 2242 (2017). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2242&Year=2017>
4. See also:
 - *WSPTA Resolution 18.22 Children with Special Needs;
 - *WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support the passage of state budget bills containing adequate levels of funding for child-related programs”;
 - *WSPTA Legislative Principle on Public Education Policies – “Ensuring the provision of high quality special education services and accommodations to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities and special needs.”
5. ESHB 2261 (2009). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2261&Year=2009>
6. SB 6080 (2015). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=6080&Year=2015>
7. See also:
 - *WSPTA Resolution 18:11 Common School Construction Funding;
 - *WSPTA Resolution 18.18 Reduction in Class Size;
 - *WSPTA Legislative Principle on Public Education Policies – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy that will strengthen public education for our state’s children and youth. The association shall support: K-12 class sizes aligned with best practice research findings”
8. See also:
 - *WSPTA Resolution 18.26 Levies and Local Effort Assistance;
 - *WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support equitable levy and local effort assistance (LEA) funding per student.”
9. See also:
 - *WSPTA Resolution 18.28 Increasing Revenue to Support Our Legislative Principles;
 - *WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support the passage of state budget bills containing adequate levels of funding for child-related programs; and Oppose budget policies, deficit reduction efforts, and other legislative proposals that negatively impact funding for child-related programs”

***For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website (www.wastatepta.org)**