

Testimony for Michelle Nims on
Governor Jay Inslee proposed supplemental operating budget

Good afternoon, Mr. Chairman and members of the committee.

I am Michelle Nims, President of the Washington State PTA, a volunteer and parent.

On behalf of our more than 133,000 members across the state, we would like to thank Governor Inslee for his commitment to supporting a quality education for all students.

We appreciate that this supplemental budget would increase salaries for educators to comply with the September 1, 2018 deadline, and that Governor Inslee is proposing strategic investments in areas of interest for our association, such as:

- career-connected learning;
- helping high poverty students access post-high-school options such college or apprenticeships;
- suicide prevention training; and
- the bilingual educator initiative.

These are all valuable investments and we encourage you to include them in a final supplemental operating budget.

In addition to these policy investments, we would strongly encourage the Legislature to enact a supplemental operating budget that addresses underfunded critical areas in education, such as:

- the gap in actual costs verses state-funded special education;
- a comprehensive hold harmless in the wake of House Bill 2242, whereby no school district would receive less funding through state or local revenues;
- investments to help address the teacher shortage issue; and
- funding to support a Family & Community Engagement Coordinator at every school – research shows that the more engaged parents and families are in their student’s school, the higher the level of academic success. We would support phasing this funding in, starting with high poverty schools first.

As a whole child association which encompasses education, family and community engagement, safety, and health and well-being, Washington State PTA’s vision is that every child’s potential becomes a reality. Therefore, we also would encourage the Legislature to expand the number of ECEAP slots for our youngest learners, and to enhance investments in the state’s Need Grant and College Bound programs, as well as other programs that make post-secondary options more accessible and affordable.

Thank you for your consideration of our remarks. We look forward to working with you on our legislative agenda this session.