

School Construction Assistance Program WSPTA Testimony on SB 5853 Work Session 2/14/19 Senate Ways & Means Committee 3:30 p.m.

Dear Chairman Frockt and Members of the Committee,

I am Sherry Rudolph, here today representing Washington State PTA, the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, in support of Senate Bill 5853.

I am a parent and a volunteer and live in the 45th Legislative District.

School Construction is one of our top five legislative priorities for 2019 voted on by delegates last Fall.

Parents sending their children off to school expect a healthy and safe school environment, the space to learn and play, the room to work collaboratively or in flexible environments.

They expect the space for their children to enjoy a seated lunch of 20 minutes, libraries that encourage reading and exploration, and hands-on courses like shop, robotics, computers, art and music.

They have supported smaller class sizes in the early years and building more classrooms to support full-day Kindergarten.

This bill takes a very-much needed step forward in funding a higher student space allocation formula and makes the state a stronger funding partner in the construction of our schools.

We would like to respectfully ask, however, that you consider two additions to Senate Bill 5853:

1. Renew the K-3 classroom grant program started in 2015 with capital funds to meet class size targets of 17:1
 - Only 20 out of 91 school districts received funding for what was expected to be three biennia of grant programs to fund more kindergarten and grades 1-3 classrooms.
 - Districts across the state are struggling to meet ratios without additional classroom capacity.
2. Document and provide oversight for the use of portable classrooms.

Parent concerns for portables include but are not limited to - access, mold growth, proximity to car emissions, quantity per site, overall condition and purpose. Portable classrooms were never intended to become a part of a school property for as many as 60 years. It is critical the state step up it's partnership with school districts and local

voters to ensure every child is attending a safe, healthy school that is conducive to learning.

Washington State PTA's vision is to make every child's potential a reality. We encourage you to amend and support Senate Bill 5853.