

WSPTA Testimony on HB 2108
House Appropriations 2/26/2019 1:30pm John L. O'Brien Building
House Hearing Rm A

Good Afternoon Chairman Ormsby and committee, I am Andy Jensen speaking today on behalf of the Washington State PTA, the oldest and largest child advocacy organization, with over 130,000 members statewide.

I am a parent, and a volunteer, and live in the 43rd legislative district.

Washington State PTA is in favor of HB 2108.

While we absolutely embrace a policy of smaller K-3 class sizes, many school districts, particularly growing ones, do not have the physical space needed to meet the sizes specified in the funding law.

The legislature plans to tie K-3 class size compliance to operating funding but only offered one round of K-3 classroom grants in the 2015-17 capital budget, leaving many school districts who qualified for funding – grappling with how to reach the ratios without the necessary classrooms.

For example, Washington State PTA has heard from the Arlington School District that the district is only 6 classrooms short of achieving compliance. As you may know, the district has failed to pass a school construction bond three times (all failing between 50% and 55%). If the K-3 compliance deadline is not delayed, the district says it will lose more than \$500,000 in funding next school year.

We urge you to delay implementation of the K-3 class size compliance by at least one year and to identify the reasons school districts are struggling to comply with the K-3 class size mandate, such as lack of classroom capacity, lack of K-3 teachers, and other factors that may surface.

Thank you.