

## Testimony on HB 2325

### House Appropriations Committee



Good afternoon, Chair Ormsby and Members of the Committee.

My name is Janice Kutzera, president of the Washington State PTA, the state's oldest and largest child advocacy organization, representing 128,000 members statewide.

I'm here today to ask the Legislature to support four budget priorities:

1. Fund the additional 14 hours of training in "required standards" for paraeducators. Last session, the Legislature funded 14 of the 28 hours required by law. We respectfully ask that all 28 hours of funding be covered in the supplemental budget so that those who work with our most vulnerable student populations get the training they need.
2. The Governor's proposal includes funding to support the addition of a behavioral health specialist at all 9 ESDs. This is critical for student well-being and support, and we ask you to maintain that funding in your budget.
3. In the 2021-22 school year, school districts will be required to screen for dyslexia. OSPI requested funding which was not included in the Governor's proposal. The funding would help districts prepare for this new mandate. This screening is an important tool to promote student academic success, and we urge you to include it in your budget. The request was \$806,000.
4. Finally, the Governor included \$484,000 for the Education Ombuds to expand family-school collaboration and outreach. As you may know, the Education Ombuds works very closely with families of students with disabilities and families with limited English skills. We believe expanding this program to more regions will help prevent conflicts between families and schools, and forge improved partnerships that benefit their students.

Thank you.