

18.26 Levies and Local Effort Assistance

Board position 2009; resolution passed 2010

Whereas, levies and Local Effort Assistance (LEA) are important supplements to Washington state funding and by law, intended to provide districts the means to enrich their school programs; and

Whereas, Washington state has acknowledged the need to reform the current levy and LEA system and through ESHB 2261 has ordered a workgroup to develop more fair options that adhere to giving local communities the flexibility to go beyond the basics, to enrich their school programs, experiment and innovate, and tailor programs to local needs; and

Whereas, the current levy formula is unfair to students because it authorizes levy limits by district that translate across the state into widely varying levy funds per student. These differences occur for no cost-based, rational reason; and

Whereas, the current LEA formula is unfair to taxpayers and students because districts with similar property values per student and similar levy tax rates are eligible to receive very different amounts of state LEA aid per student. These funding differences are neither entirely cost-based nor rational; and

Whereas, ESHB 2261 has ordered the workgroup to recommend a phase-in plan for the new system of levy and LEA funding that ensures no school district suffers a decrease in funding from one school year to the next during the implementation of the new system.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports a new levy and LEA funding system that does indeed provide districts the means to meet their unique needs and enrich their programs; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports a new levy and LEA funding system that is transparent so as to be understandable to policymakers, educators, parents, and voters; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports an equitable levy system that is fair to all students and only allows for the differences in the amount of levy money raised per student that are based on rational and justifiable costs. Such rational and justifiable costs include those for the additional resources needed to educate students in special education or English Language Learners programs or who live in poverty, and operating schools in a high-cost region, whether it is urban, suburban or rural; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports an equitable LEA system that only permits cost-based and rational differences in the maximum state LEA aid per student that a district may receive. Such cost-based and rational differences should include those for a district's high-cost students and for operating in a high-cost region; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA supports a new levy and LEA funding system that includes a "do-no-harm" provision. The total amount of local and state funding per student under the new funding system in each district should be no less than the district's prior total funding per student.