

Proposed Legislative Issues and Resolutions

During the annual WSPTA Legislative Assembly, delegates decide the public policy positions that guide state and local advocacy work for WSPTA and its affiliated local PTAs and councils. Legislative Assembly will take place on October 16-17, 2026 at Cascadia Community College in Bothell.

Delegates will consider the adoption of 8 new legislative issues. Legislative issues adopted by delegates will also be ranked to determine the top 5 for the 2027 and 2028 legislative sessions.

Delegates will also consider adoption of two new resolutions. Adoption of resolution 1 allows another resolution to be retired because those goals have been incorporated into the new resolution.

See the [Advocacy section](#) of the WSPTA website for more information about the legislative platform.

Only the parts in shaded boxes are open for amendment and debate during Legislative Assembly.

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LEGISLATIVE ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are 8 new legislative issue for consideration. Only the title and description statement in the shaded boxes can be amended during Legislative Assembly.

1. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Empower Communities to Build Schools Where Students Thrive

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that lower the school bond election threshold to a simple majority, remove the 40 percent validation requirement, and develop additional, equitable access to state school construction funds for districts where voter-approved bonds cannot generate sufficient revenue due to a limited property tax base.

Persuasive Statement

WSPTA has been working on school construction bond reform for 40 years! School construction funding is critical to pay for school construction projects, including addressing student safety, overcrowding, improving indoor air quality, updating heating and cooling systems, ADA compliance, aging buildings, seismic safety, and other important building updates and maintenance. Basic education funding does not include school construction; instead, school districts must pass capital bonds or levies to construct, upgrade, remodel and maintain school facilities.

Some school districts can pass capital bonds and levies while others cannot, resulting in inequitable learning environments for students. Many districts around the state are unable to support school construction bond or capital levy measures due to lower property values and a small commercial base, resulting in higher tax increases than in areas with larger commercial tax bases.

Washington is one of only 10 states that require more than 50% to pass school bonds and one of only 7 that require a supermajority. In the February and April 2025 and 2026 elections, of the 26 bond measures on the ballot, only 11 passed; two more earned at least 60% support but still failed because turnout fell short of the validation requirement. WSPTA has a long-standing resolution to pass a simple majority for bonds.

There is growing momentum across education, labor, and business groups to let voters vote on this crucial issue, with the best opportunity in years to fix the system by putting a constitutional amendment to a vote of the people.

2. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Strategic Investments to Improve Student Outcomes

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation and budgets that ensure the financial stability of all school districts, close funding gaps, and restore recent cuts, so that state funding reflects and keeps pace with actual costs, and supports revising the funding model to become more equity- and student-centered, with increased investments in programs known to improve student outcomes.

Persuasive Statement

All schools must follow the same laws to deliver the mandated components of education.

PTA's position is clear - when the state requires something of schools, it must fund it.

But despite funding basic education being named as Washington's paramount duty in the state constitution, state funding doesn't cover actual costs of what districts spend to deliver what the laws require, and they are forced to use levy dollars and reserves to fill the gaps. Many districts are running out of ways to meet the demands of rising costs and are close to binding financial conditions.

This was true for 2025-26, yet the legislature still made cuts to education, making the problem worse. For the 2027-29 budget, PTA must advocate for restoration of those cuts, and investments that close funding gaps.

Making sure districts don't go bankrupt is the bare minimum!

Students have not recovered from the pandemic; attendance and test scores are down, with family income, race, or presence of a disability still having enormous influence on student outcomes. This is not acceptable.

Washington's funding model is incapable of equitably or sustainably funding schools. It must be revised to become more equity and student centered, increasing investments in low-income (low property value) areas and in current categorical programs. For example, in Washington a student from a low-income family attending a high poverty school generates 10% more funding. In California, the same student would generate 85% more funding, and those investments have had measurable positive results.

It's time for Washington to invest in programs with evidence of improving student outcomes. Our students can't wait.

3. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Fund Climate-Ready Schools: Clean Air, Heat-Safe

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation and policies that fund K–12 HVAC modernization — ventilation improvements, filtration, cooling, and energy-efficient systems — using Climate Commitment Act revenues and capital funding, to protect student health and learning including during wildfire smoke and extreme heat and to meet Clean Buildings Performance Standards.

Persuasive Statement

Washington's K–12 schools were built for a Pacific Northwest climate that no longer exists. Wildfire smoke now closes classrooms for days or longer. Multi-day heat events push uncooled buildings past temperatures at which children can learn safely. Washington is currently in a statewide drought emergency. On the worst days, schools must choose between unsafe outdoor air and unsafe indoor air, and the students who are hardest hit are the ones who can least absorb it: children with asthma and respiratory conditions, students on 504 plans and IEPs, and students in low-income communities.

The single highest-leverage investment Washington can make to protect students is modernizing school HVACs. High-efficiency filtration (MERV-13+), mechanical cooling, and adequate ventilation are the engineering controls that keep wildfire smoke out, keep classrooms cool enough for learning, and keep medically vulnerable students in school. HVAC modernization is also how schools can become clean-air and cooling refuges for surrounding communities during emergencies.

The Climate Commitment Act (CCA) provides Washington with dedicated revenue intended for exactly this purpose: climate mitigation and adaptation. CCA investment in school HVACs could unlock federal Direct Pay for up to 50% of project costs, plus provide ongoing savings with 30-77% energy-efficiency improvements. Dedicating a share of CCA revenues to K–12 HVAC modernization protects the population least responsible for climate pollution yet most harmed by the impacts, while reinforcing our state's paramount duty to amply fund basic education. Vote YES to promote student health, cost savings, community resilience, and educational equity!

4. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Ensuring Literacy & Math Proficiency for All Students

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that ensure every Washington student achieves foundational literacy and mathematics proficiency by strengthening early learning, funding enhanced intervention and coaching support, investing in evidence-based instruction and training, and integrating mental health supports.

Persuasive Statement

Every child in Washington deserves to learn to read, write, and do math. Not as a privilege — as a promise.

Right now, that promise is broken for too many kids. Only 44% of Washington students are meeting grade-level standards in math, and fewer than half are on track in reading. Washington has dropped from 20th to 27th in national education rankings over the past decade, and we rank 34th among all states in math recovery since the pandemic. These gaps fall hardest on the students who already face the greatest barriers. Children in poverty, students of color, English language learners, students with disabilities, and students experiencing homelessness are disproportionately impacted. For these kids, falling behind doesn't just affect their grades, it shapes their future.

Students who struggle with reading or math are significantly more likely to develop anxiety and depression, disengage, and stop showing up altogether. The academic crisis and the mental health crisis are related.

Washington has the tools to fix this, but we need the will to use them. That means expanding intervention funding and fixing the eligibility rules that shut out approximately 50,000 students who need help most. It means investing in high-quality early learning, so children arrive at kindergarten ready to thrive. And it means ensuring every teacher has coaching support and deep training in structured literacy and evidence-based mathematics instruction — because the best intervention is a great first lesson.

Washington's kids can't wait.

5. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Addressing Funding, Inclusion, and Support in Special Education

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation, policies, and budgets that:

- Fully funds special education services and improves equity in funding formulas;
- Addresses the statewide special education staffing shortage;
- Provides ongoing training in inclusionary practices while meeting all specially designed instruction and accommodation requirements; and
- Addresses disproportionality in identification, referrals and discipline.

Persuasive Statement

It is the paramount duty of the state to provide a basic education. This right extends to all students, regardless of disability, and yet it is not fully funded in Washington. There is a \$531 million dollar gap between what is funded versus the actual cost, and districts are having to use other resources to cover that gap. It is not acceptable that all students suffer from the impact of underfunding when it is the federal government's legal requirement to provide a Free and Appropriate Education to students with disabilities.

Students with and without disabilities benefit from inclusive environments. Research has shown a positive impact for students with disabilities in reading, math, and social-emotional learning skills. With continued support for teachers on inclusive practices using evidence-based research, all students will be better off.

In Washington, we face a teacher shortage where special education teachers are number two on the list of areas where we are seeing teacher shortages. Not having enough highly qualified teachers hurts our students. As we prepare students for college, career, and life, we must support them in learning to navigate the world with their peers. We must eliminate the significant disproportionality in how special education students are identified and disciplined—especially our Black and Brown students with disabilities—and ensure they graduate with the technological knowledge, accommodations, and self-advocacy skills necessary to succeed beyond high school.

6. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Addressing the Student Mental Health Crisis

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that ensure all students have access to behavioral mental health resources, including funding, for:

- Reduced student to mental health professional ratios
- Programs and incentives to recruit, train, and retain mental health professionals
- Resources for families, training and support for educators and administrators, and responses to traumatic incidents

Persuasive Statement

Addressing the student mental health crisis needs to remain as the WSPTA legislative priority. Many studies have shown that school is a critical conduit for connecting students with behavioral health supports, and one of the most meaningful upstream interventions to support mental health.

According to the WSPTA 2025 and 2026 Legislative Scorecards, there was very little progress in the previous legislative biennium regarding improving student mental health. The Washington State 2025 Healthy Youth Survey shows improvement between 2021 and 2025 but there is still a ways to go. Student responses to questions regarding anxious and depressive feelings and considering and planning suicide remain high. Currently, there are not enough mental health resources available in our state, with rural communities ranking as Mental Health Professional Shortage Areas. This creates barriers to timely care.

There is a cyclical relationship between truancy and exclusion and mental health concerns. Students who are truant or feel excluded can develop anxiety making it hard to return to school and having a mental health concern can make it difficult to attend school. School districts have a mandate to have a postvention plan to respond to death by suicide in the school community. Postvention services need to be expanded to other traumatic incidents that happen in or around the school community. Our students continue to be affected by stressors that lead to mental health challenges. We must continue to urge legislators to address the student mental health crisis.

7. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Keep Students Safer from Gun Violence

Washington State PTA shall advocate for legislation or policies that:

- Strengthen safe storage laws to reduce youth firearm suicide, unintentional shootings, school shootings, and violent crime.
- Limit firearms in sensitive places like parks, playgrounds, and public buildings.
- Support community violence prevention, suicide prevention, and mental health programs.

Persuasive Statement

WSPTA affirms that children and youth deserve to be both safe and feel safe from gun violence. Firearms are the leading cause of death for American children and teens, now for the fourth year in a row. In Washington, the rate of gun deaths increased by 12% from 2015 to 2024. This has been among our top Legislative Issues since 2018.

Mass shootings, school shootings, domestic violence, suicides, and both intentional and accidental firearm deaths continue to harm our communities. Roughly 74% of school shooters obtain guns from their own home or that of a relative or friend, yet more than half of gun-owning households with children do not securely store all firearms. Safe storage saves lives: strong laws are linked to a 12% drop in youth firearm suicides and a 13% drop in unintentional shooting deaths and injuries, and could prevent up to 32% of youth firearm deaths.

Children, youth, and families should not encounter gun violence in the places they frequent, such as parks, playgrounds, and public buildings. Communities most affected must be supported by community-based organizations with lived experience and culturally responsive solutions—approaches shown to cut homicides by over 20% and violent crime by an average of 30%, while saving \$5 for every \$1 invested.

We must act now to prevent and reduce the trauma of gun violence and suicide in Washington.

8. Proposed New Legislative Issue

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: No recommendation [\[back to top\]](#)

Restoring Focus with Personal Electronic Devices Off and Away for the Day

Washington State PTA supports legislation and policies addressing student personal electronic device use in schools. It advocates for a statewide minimum standard for school districts that requires K–12 students' personal devices be off and inaccessible from first bell of the school day to the last bell, with state-defined accommodations, local control over implementation, and positive, proactive enforcement.

Persuasive Statement

Washington must ensure that every student in our state has access to a school environment that is free from personal-device distraction and prioritizes learning, focus, social development, and emotional well-being.

More than 30 states have adopted laws or policies restricting student mobile device use at school. Meanwhile, Washington continues to rely on inconsistent and, at times, inadequate local rules.

Phones in schools undermine focus, an essential prerequisite for learning. Seventy-two percent of high-school teachers identify cellphone distraction as a major problem, and studies of schools that banned mobile phones found test scores rose, with the largest gains among lower-achieving students. Safety experts add that phones can pull students away from staff instructions during emergencies.

Adolescents spend close to a quarter of the school day on their phones, with social media the largest single category of phone use. In a 2023 advisory, the U.S. Surgeon General warned that social media poses a serious risk of harm to young people's mental health.

A patchwork of classroom-by-classroom rules is not enough; inconsistent enforcement undermines their effectiveness. But a statewide standard need not be rigid. While it must ensure carve-outs for necessary accommodations such as IEPs, 504s, and medical needs as well as champion positive, proactive enforcement, it must also allow for local policy creation and control over implementation.

That is why WSPTA should support a statewide minimum standard - K–12 students' personal devices off and inaccessible, from first bell of the school day to the last bell. Every student, regardless of zip code or district, deserves a focused, distraction-free school day.

RESOLUTIONS FOR CONSIDERATION

Resolutions are a long-term part of our legislative platform that guides state and local advocacy work for WSPTA and its local PTAs and councils.

There are two new resolutions for consideration. Adoption of resolution 1 allows another resolution to be retired because those goals have been incorporated into the new resolution.

Only the titles and resolved clauses that are in shaded boxes can be amended by delegates at Legislative Assembly. The whereas clauses are not open for amendment by delegates. If a resolved clause of a resolution is amended by delegates, the resolutions committee will edit the whereas clause(s) as necessary.

1. Proposed New Resolution

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

If delegates at Legislative Assembly adopt this new resolution, the following resolution would be retired:
[18.32 Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia](#)

Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, and Developmental Coordination Disorder

Whereas, specific learning and developmental disabilities — including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD, sometimes known as dyspraxia) — are neurobiological in origin and affect approximately 1 in 5 students, or more than 200,000 children in Washington state's public schools; and

Whereas, specific learning and developmental disabilities have been defined to include a variety of neurological conditions that interfere with a person's ability to store, process, or produce information, or to coordinate movement which may interfere with learning. These conditions are defined by leading scientific and medical bodies as follows:

- Dyslexia is a specific learning disability characterized by difficulties in word reading and/or spelling that involve accuracy, speed, or both, and vary depending on the orthography; these difficulties occur along a continuum of severity and underlying difficulties with phonological and morphological processing are common.
- Dysgraphia is a neurological learning disability that impairs a person's ability to write legibly and organize written thoughts. It affects the physical act of writing, such as fine motor skills and handwriting, as well as the cognitive process of translating thoughts into written words.
- Dyscalculia is a specific learning disability in mathematics, including difficulties with number sense, memorization of basic math facts, and accurate and fluent calculation.
- Developmental Coordination Disorder (DCD), commonly known as dyspraxia or apraxia, is a neurodevelopmental condition that affects fine and/or gross motor skills and balance, including motor planning and execution or speech. Although DCD is a motor condition rather than a learning disability, its effects on handwriting and classroom participation directly impede academic access; and

Whereas, decades of neuroscience, multidisciplinary research and the science of reading have confirmed that these disabilities are neurobiological in origin and that learning to read requires explicit, systematic instruction; Structured Literacy — encompassing phonological awareness, phonics, fluency,

vocabulary, comprehension, oral language, and knowledge building — is the most effective approach for all students, and especially for those with specific learning and developmental disabilities; and explicit, systematic instruction is equally the evidence-based approach for mathematics in dyscalculia (building number sense, computational fluency, and problem solving), for written expression in dysgraphia (multisensory handwriting/letter-formation, explicit transcription and composition skills of the writing process), and for motor coordination in DCD (task-oriented occupational therapy); and

Whereas, when specific learning and developmental disabilities are left unidentified or unsupported, the consequences extend beyond academics to students' mental health, self-confidence, and long-term opportunities; these harms fall disproportionately on students of color, English Language Learners, and students from lower-income households or experiencing homelessness, who are less likely to be identified and more likely to lack access to effective intervention; and many educators remain underprepared to recognize early warning signs and lack the knowledge and skills to deliver effective instruction; and

Whereas, effective support for students with specific learning and developmental disabilities requires a whole-school approach — including pre-service preparation that equips new educators with the knowledge and skills to identify and serve these students, ongoing in-service professional development that keeps educators current with evidence-based practices, and training for school administrators who must understand the legal obligations, support implementation, and direct resources to ensure every student receives timely and appropriate intervention; and

Whereas, Washington state has made important first steps — including requiring early literacy screening for students in grades K–2 and adopting evidence-based Structured Literacy curriculum standards — yet 40% of the state's fourth graders are still reading below grade level (16), and too many students with dyslexia and related disabilities continue to wait too long for identification and support; and

Whereas, screening for dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and DCD too often stops after early elementary grades, leaving many students unidentified into middle and high school; students who mask their learning differences, along with those from historically underserved communities, are especially likely to go undiagnosed, as their struggles may be misattributed to other factors rather than an underlying learning or developmental disability, and their families often lack the resources to pursue private evaluation.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support universal, evidence-based, and culturally responsive screening for all students, at all grade levels and not limited to the early elementary years, for signs of specific learning and developmental disabilities, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and DCD with results shared promptly and transparently with families in their home language, along with clear information about available supports, their right to request a full evaluation under federal law, and access to counseling and assistive technology for students whose well-being is affected; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support evidence-based instruction and interventions for all students with specific learning and developmental disabilities — including

explicit, structured approaches to literacy, mathematics, written expression, and motor skill development — delivered as high-quality core instruction for all students and with greater intensity for those who need additional support through a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS) framework, in both general education and special education settings, and responsive to students' individual, cultural, and linguistic needs; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support meaningful training and professional development for all educators and school administrators — including pre-service preparation and ongoing in-service learning that provides comprehensive instruction in foundational literacy and mathematics skills and instructional practice grounded in the principles of Structured Literacy and aligned with current neurocognitive and multidisciplinary research, as well as expanded specialization opportunities — in identifying and supporting students with specific learning and developmental disabilities, including dyslexia, dysgraphia, dyscalculia, and DCD, across diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils support sustained public funding for robust, evidence-based Tier 1 instruction in foundational literacy and learning skills for all students — grounded in Structured Literacy principles and aligned with current neurocognitive and multidisciplinary research — delivered within a Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) framework to ensure effective implementation; and for evidence-based intervention, referral, and alignment at Tiers 2 and 3 for students who need additional assistance; reported transparently and, where feasible, examined for equity gaps across existing student groups; the development of screening and assessment tools valid for multilingual learners and students from Indigenous language communities; and updating Washington's statutory definitions to align with current science.

Persuasive Statement

Specific learning and developmental disabilities affect 1 in 5 students — more than 200,000 Washington children — yet the resolution guiding our advocacy on these conditions has not been updated since 2016.

The science has moved forward. The International Dyslexia Association released its first updated definition of dyslexia in over twenty years in 2025. Neuroscience research has confirmed these are neurobiological conditions, and decades of research have identified Structured Literacy as the most effective instructional approach — for all students, not only those with disabilities. Dyscalculia, dysgraphia, and DCD each affect roughly 1 in 15 students and respond to the same principle: early screening paired with explicit, systematic instruction.

Washington law has moved forward, too. Since 2016, our state has passed landmark legislation requiring early literacy screening and, in 2026, codifying Structured Literacy curriculum standards. Yet 40% of Washington's fourth graders are still reading below grade level.

The harm of unidentified disabilities falls hardest on students of color, English Language Learners, and students from lower-income families — who are less likely to be identified and less likely to receive effective intervention.

Our resolution must reflect this reality. Please vote yes to adopt this new Resolution to retire and replace 18.32.

2. Proposed New Resolution

WSPTA Board of Directors' recommendation: Adopt [\[back to top\]](#)

Safe Siting for Battery Energy Storage Systems

Whereas, one of the purposes of Washington State PTA is to advocate for laws that further the education, physical and mental health, welfare, and safety of children and youth; and

Whereas, battery energy storage systems (BESS) are large-scale, grid-connected facilities that store electricity in lithium-ion batteries and are being proposed and sited with increasing frequency in Washington state, including in residential zones immediately adjacent to schools, childcare facilities, and other institutions serving children; and

Whereas, BESS incidents can result in thermal runaway, producing chemical fires that release toxins, notably hydrogen fluoride; and emergency response modeling for various emerging hazards typically uses a 175-pound adult as the exposure baseline, which does not account for children's smaller body mass, higher respiratory rates, and developing lungs and organ systems, with the result that current risk assessments may systematically underestimate the severity of toxic exposure for children in nearby schools and childcare settings; and

Whereas, BESS facilities in Washington state are permitted through a patchwork of local land use processes that vary by jurisdiction and apply no uniform siting standard, so that the safety protections afforded a school community depend on which county or city conducts the review rather than on any consistent statewide requirement; and

Whereas, schools are responsible for safety and evacuation planning children enrolled in public schools near BESS facility sites face uncertain and poorly documented risks; no statewide agency known to WSPTA tracks all BESS facilities proposed or permitted through local review in Washington State, leaving affected school communities to discover such proposals independently; and

Whereas, existing rules applicable to BESS facilities do not address proximity to schools, require community notice or consent, or mandate site-specific risk analysis for neighboring populations, and no county siting code closes this gap; and

Whereas, no law in Washington state requires centralized notice to school communities when a BESS facility is proposed nearby, requiring each school and school district to independently discover such proposals through its own monitoring of regulatory proceedings, a burden that falls most heavily on communities with limited technical, legal, and financial resources; and

Whereas, siting decisions for commercial facilities using BESS may disproportionately affect communities with fewer economic and political resources, which may lack access to technical expertise, face barriers to legal representation or independent safety review, and already bear cumulative environmental and public health burdens, creating a heightened risk that BESS facilities will be placed where residents are least able to evaluate risk, advocate for protective measures, or effectively participate in regulatory proceedings; and

Whereas, effective fire service response to a BESS incident depends on responders having manufacturer emergency response guidelines and site-specific pre-incident plans available before an incident occurs,

because standard guidance directs crews at commercial and utility installations to follow the pre-plan rather than enter the structure and to operate emergency disconnects only where those are identified in advance, so that absent such documentation and site-specific hazard and evacuation plans, local departments cannot safely pre-plan response or protect nearby school populations; and

Whereas, with the emerging technology of BESS and subsequent incidents, there are exposure risks, local fire departments are not necessarily equipped or trained to manage large scale incidents and such firefighting efforts require hazmat firefighting techniques and equipment.

Therefore, be it

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils urge the Washington State Legislature to establish statewide siting and safety standards for facilities using commercial Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) that establish minimum setbacks from schools and educational settings and require a site suitability analysis for proposed sites near schools or residential areas before a project enters the permitting process, ensuring consistent procedural safeguards regardless of the permitting authority; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for mandatory early and meaningful public notification and structured community engagement processes when facilities using commercial BESS are proposed near schools, educational settings or residential areas, including clear disclosure of project details, public meetings, and opportunities for community comment before siting decisions are finalized; and be it further

Resolved, that Washington State PTA and its local PTAs and councils advocate for adequate funding and preparation requirements ensuring that local fire departments and emergency response agencies are fully informed, trained, and equipped to respond to incidents involving facilities using commercial BESS, including access to safety documentation, emergency shutdown procedures, and site-specific hazard and evacuation plans before siting decisions are finalized.

Persuasive Statement

Washington's permitting systems were built for familiar industrial categories with well-characterized risks. Commercial Battery Energy Storage Systems (BESS) are now being sited across the state, but these emerging clean energy technologies have not yet undergone the level of study, regulatory development, or procedural safeguards needed to protect nearby schools and residential communities. As a result, facilities using commercial BESS may be proposed directly adjacent to educational settings or homes without minimum setbacks, suitability review, or meaningful community input with the impacted communities.

Children bear the consequences of regulatory gaps. Emergency-response modeling relies on adult exposure baselines, underestimating toxic risk for children with smaller body mass, higher respiratory rates, and developing organ systems. Not all schools can self-protect; communities need emergency responders to have training, equipment, and site-specific hazard plans in place before siting decisions are finalized.



This resolution advocates for closing the gaps by establishing statewide siting and safety standards for commercial BESS facilities, including minimum setbacks from schools and suitability review for proposed sites near schools or residential areas. It ensures early, meaningful public notification and structured community engagement so families can understand and respond to proposed projects. And it requires adequate funding and preparation for local fire departments and emergency-response agencies to safely manage BESS-related incidents.

WSPTA is uniquely positioned to advocate for these protections statewide, ensuring safe siting practices that prioritize the health and safety of all children.