

# **IMPROVING STUDENT PERFORMANCE**

## **THE FUNDAMENTALS**

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Submitted to the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance  
November 4, 2008

# DEDICATED

*To those who have no vested interest in protecting the status quo but aren't sure exactly what needs to be done.*

**“It is an economic necessity that we change our entire education system.”**

Washington Learns, page 4

**“It will not be easy.”**

Washington Learns, page 6

## INTRODUCTION

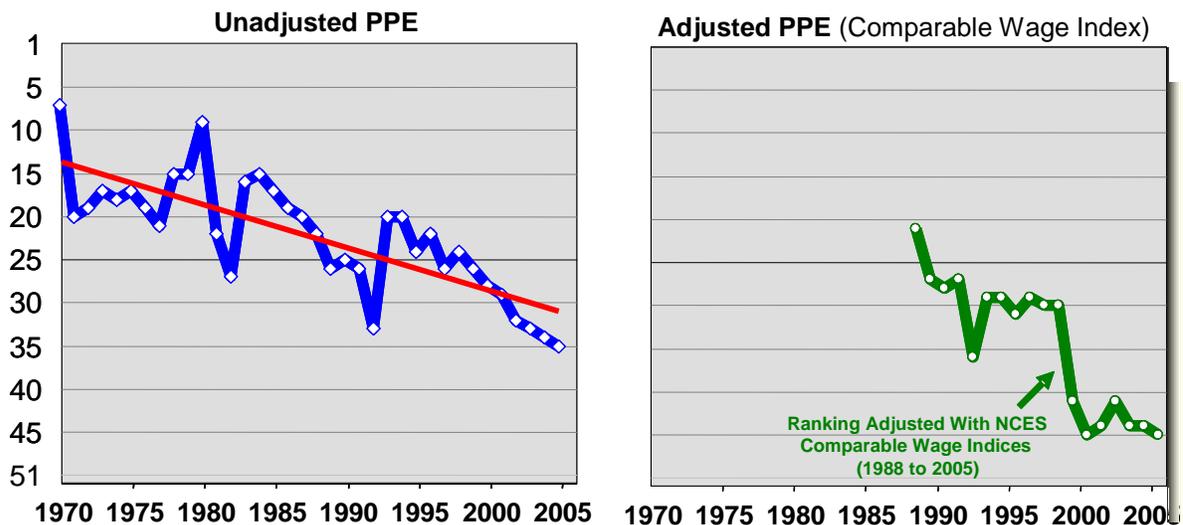
Enacted in 2007, Senate Bill 5627 stipulates, “The joint task force...shall...propose a new definition of basic education that is realigned with the new expectations of the state’s education system as established in the November 2006 final report of the Washington Learns steering committee.”

In addition to several specific assignments, section three of Senate Bill 5627 stipulates, “The funding structure should...be based on research-proven education programs...,” and “linked to accountability for student outcomes and performance.” Finally, one of the proposed options “must be...within existing resources.”

The Washington State Institute for Public Policy was assigned responsibility for conducting research and reviews of existing research. Despite the limited vigor of most education research, Institute staff identified selected findings of significance, many of which are cited in the recommendations following this introduction.

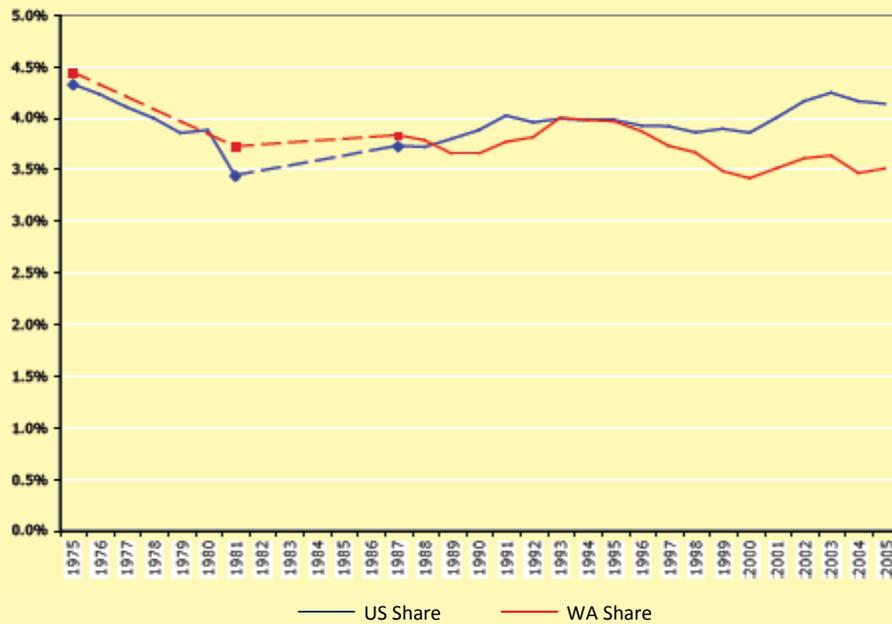
According to the Washington Learns Steering Committee and the League of Education Voters, a non-profit organization dedicated to improving education, Washington State public school funding is not keeping up with other states.

**Chart 1. Washington’s Ranking on Per-Pupil K–12 Educational Expenditures (PPE)**  
 (1 is the state with the highest PPE, 51 is the state with the lowest)



Source: WSIPP. Data from the U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Data are for academic years 1969-70 to 2004-05. The Comparable Wage Index used here is a composite of the Comparable Wage Index by Lori Taylor (2007) and the General Wage Index by Dan Goldhaber (1999).

**CHART 2. A Decade of Underinvestment: Washington has invested less in K-12 operations—measured as a share of personal income—than the US average**



Source: ECONorthwest calculated using data from the US Bureau of Economic Analysis and National Center for Education Statistics.

*From the June 2008 League of Education Voters proposal*

Student academic achievement in the state is dramatically better today than it was 10 years ago but has stagnated in recent years. The dropout rate has barely budged and research published by the Washington League of Education Voters indicates student performance is only average when adjusted for family income and ethnicity (see Chart 3 on next page).

Improving student performance will require increased funding. It also will require structural reforms, in the absence of which any infusion of new funding will leave in place the deficiencies of the current system and create another cycle of inequitable and inadequate educational opportunities inimical to improved student performance.

Essential structural reforms include a new definition of basic education, improved student testing programs, fundamental changes in the way we certify and compensate teachers and other school employees, and greater responsibility for school oversight and assistance by the Governor; each reform is addressed in separate sections of this proposal. The first five sections are submitted with the intent of complying with the stipulation that the Task Force should include in its report an option “within existing resources.” The final section proposes funding reforms and improvements.

**CHART 3. A Closer Look at NAEP Scores Suggests Washington's K-12 Performance is Average at Best: Most Student Subgroups Don't Outperform their US Peers**

Testing Year	Assessment	All Students	White	Black	Hispanics	Asian / Pacific Islander	Lunch Eligible	Lunch Ineligible
2007	Mathematics 4th Grade	H	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Mathematics 8th grade	H	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Reading 4th Grade	H	S	S	S	S	H	S
	Reading 8th grade	H	S	S	S	S	S	S
2002	Writing 4th Grade	H	S	S	S	S	S	S
	Writing 8th grade	S	S	S	S	S	S	S
2005	Science 4th Grade	H	L	H	S	S	H	S
	Science 8th grade	H	S	H	S	S	H	H

**H** Share of subpopulation scoring at or above the basic achievement level is **HIGHER** in Washington than for the US

**L** Share of subpopulation scoring at or above the basic achievement level is **LOWER** in Washington than for the US

**S** Share scoring at or above the basic achievement level in Washington is **STATISTICALLY INDISTINGUISHABLE** from US

Source: ECONorthwest calculated using National Assessment of Education Progress (NAEP) data.

From the June 2008 League of Education Voters proposal

Specific recommendations in this proposal are based on several principles aligned with the goal of improving student performance:

1. All students must have the opportunity to achieve their full academic potential.
2. Students have diverse needs, abilities, and aspirations.
3. Effective teachers are essential to academic success.
4. Standardized tests are essential to assure program and teacher quality.
5. Incentives to instill motivation are better than sanctions.
6. The authority of the state must be aligned with its responsibilities.

Many of the proposals in this report will be dismissed and opposed as an attack on “local control.” The arguments will be specious. The issue is not state versus local control, it is figuring out what needs to be done to improve “student outcomes and performance” stipulated in Senate Bill 5627. The state is constitutionally responsible for providing a common

school system, not local districts. The administration and operation of local districts must be aligned with and subordinate to the fulfillment of the obligations of the state as a whole.

State control of the public school system is well established and greater control is inevitable. The state assumed primary responsibility for school funding following numerous levy failures in the 1970s. In the 1990s, the enactment of education reform and the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) constituted a repudiation of local control.

The status quo will be vigorously defended. The challenge before us is to resist the temptation to acquiesce. In a 1989 speech at a meeting of the Washington State School Directors' Association, former Governor Booth Gardner said, "It's the status quo in education that puts us, as a nation, at risk."

My recommendations are not as detailed or as comprehensive as additional time and expertise might allow. I am eager to incorporate suggestions anyone might have that are consistent with the principles I have identified. I also recognize fundamental reforms will take time to implement.

I am grateful for the information and insights offered to me privately over the past several months by many people dedicated to improving educational opportunities for our children. Members and staff of the League of Education Voters merit special recognition. The recommendations in this proposal are nonetheless my sole responsibility, as are all errors and omissions.

I also greatly appreciate the contributions of Task Force members and everyone else who has been involved in our deliberations, especially the staff of the Washington State Institute for Public Policy: Director Roxanne Lieb, Associate Director Steve Aos, Annie Pennucci, Irene Ngugi, Shawn Whiteman, and Janie Maki.

## **BASIC EDUCATION**

1. Stipulate that the state will offer basic education instructional programs sufficient to provide students with a reasonable opportunity to meet college admission standards.
2. Stipulate that academic achievement will be the sole responsibility of each student.
3. Enact new basic education staffing and student instructional hours.
4. Prohibit waivers of minimum student instructional hours.
5. Expand and standardize instructional assistance for students at risk of failing to meet appropriate academic achievement standards, including pre-school children.

**“The joint task force shall develop...a new definition of basic education...”**

SB 5627, section 2(1)

**“We must shift our thinking away from that of separate, independent education delivery systems.”**

Washington Learns, page 6

**“We must compare ourselves to the best education systems...and set clear goals...”**

Washington Learns, page 7

## **BASIC EDUCATION**

The current Basic Education Act specifies the number of school employees and instructional hours deemed necessary to provide students with appropriate educational opportunities. It does not establish a standard of academic achievement.

A new definition of basic education should be “linked to accountability for student outcomes and performance” based on college admission standards. It should “*set clear goals*” and establish the state’s obligation to provide ample and equitable staffing as well as student instructional hours and courses aligned with the knowledge and skills necessary for students to achieve their full academic potential.

College admission standards should be recommended by the Higher Education Coordinating Board (HECB) and approved by the Governor and Legislature. Students should be able to pursue other educational opportunities consistent with their aspirations and abilities.

## **STUDENT RESPONSIBILITY**

Academic achievement ultimately must be the sole responsibility of students and their families. As acknowledged in the 2006 Washington Learns report, “State government cannot and should not be the only party responsible for education.” The state cannot control student ability or commitment and must not be responsible for matters beyond its control.

## **MINIMUM HOURS**

The HECB suggested minimum college admission standards entail the equivalent of 15 annual credit hours: four in English, three in math, two in science, three in social studies, two in a foreign language, and one in art.

The state should define basic education to guarantee five annual credit hours of instruction in grades 9 through 12 for a total of 20 annual credit hours. Twenty hours would meet the existing HECB college admission standard and provide an additional five credit hours in career and technical education, Advanced Placement programs, fine arts, health and fitness, and other courses of instruction.

Accordingly, the existing state requirement of 180 days and 1,000 hours of student instructional time should be revised to a minimum of 900 hours for each school year, the equivalent of 180 five-hour days. Local districts should be allowed to determine the number of school days necessary to provide the required 900 hours of instructional time.

Funding for additional hours of instruction, teacher preparation, and other matters can—and should—be provided by the state or local districts but should be subject to appropriations and compared to other state priorities, not guaranteed by statute.

Student instructional time is a major factor in the state’s school funding formula. While there is little or no evidence to indicate the number of instructional hours necessary for students to achieve any specific academic standard, there is as yet insufficient evidence of a better system on which to base an improved funding formula. When sufficient student performance information is available, the state’s funding formula should be based on staffing ratios and student performance, not “seat time” instructional hours.

## **MINIMUM CERTIFICATED INSTRUCTIONAL STAFFING**

Existing statutes and budget policies do not specify daily instructional hours or teacher planning time. The state should establish minimum staffing allocations based on five hours of instruction per day, more than sufficient to meet existing state college admission course recommendations (see Table 1). The state can—and should—provide funding for additional hours of instruction and teacher planning and preparation, subject to appropriation.

Table 1 illustrates the current implicit staffing ratios assuming six hours of instruction for students and average staffing ratios sufficient to accommodate one hour of teacher planning and preparation per day. The far right column displays the staffing ratios required to provide a basic education based on five hours of instruction for students.

**Table 1. Students per State-Funded Certificated Instructional Staff**

Type of Staff	Current Implicit Staffing Ratios at 6 Hours of Instruction for Students, 1 Hour Teacher Planning	Proposed Basic Education Based on 5 Hours Instruction for Students, 0 Hour Teacher Planning
Grade K–5 Teachers	24.7	21.2
Grade 6–12 Teachers	29.0	25.5
Instructional Coaches	1,250.0	1,000.0
Librarians	786.0	500.0
Counselors/Support	462.0	400.0
Nurses	2,659.0	750.0
Average for all staff, grades K–5	18.8	18.5
Average for all staff, grades 6–12	21.7	21.7

The state allocations for staffing should specify the assumed hours of instruction for students, teacher planning periods, and the ratios of students to teachers and other staff. Allocations should be for appropriation purposes only. Local districts should be authorized to determine specific staff requirements.

**MINIMUM CLASSIFIED STAFFING**

The state should identify specific classified staffing allocations based on existing district practices, as displayed in Table 2. Allocations should be for appropriations purposes only. Local districts should be authorized to determine specific staff requirements.

**Table 2. Students per State-Funded Classified Staff: Basic Education**

Type of Staff	Current Funding Allocation	Current Funding with Defined Allocations by Category
Aides (including Library Aides)	Not specified	2.8
Secretaries	Not specified	3.0
Central Office	Not specified	4.0
Service Workers	Not specified	0.9
Safety	Not specified	0.1
Technology	Not specified	0.4
Graduation Advisor	Not specified	0.0
Custodians	Not specified	4.3
Groundskeepers	Not specified	0.5
Maintenance Workers	Not specified	1.1
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.1</b>	<b>17.1</b>

## **WAIVER PROHIBITION**

The State Board of Education and Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction should be prohibited from waiving the statutory minimum hours of student instructional time. Local districts should be allowed to determine the number of days necessary to provide the required hours of student instructional time.

## **STUDENTS AT RISK**

The state must provide for the identification of students and pre-school children at risk of failing to meet state academic standards and provide appropriate, uniform, and integrated instructional programs that incorporate the English Language Learners program (ELL) and Learning Assistance Program (LAP).

Funding for at-risk programs should be separated from other programs and based on best practices identified by the Superintendent of Public Instruction. Instruction should be provided by certificated teachers. Programs and procedures should be established by the state and documented for each student.

Programs for at-risk pre-school children eventually should be integrated with common school programs for at-risk students, consistent with the Washington Learns finding that “we must shift our thinking away from that of separate, independent education delivery systems.

## **TESTING, GRADUATION, and COLLEGE ADMISSION STANDARDS**

1. Establish four high school graduation standards:
  - Certificate of Academic Mastery.
  - Certificate of Academic Achievement.
  - Certificate of Academic Completion.
  - Certificate of Individual Achievement.
2. Establish performance requirements for end-of-course or comprehensive national or international standardized tests aligned with college admission standards.
3. Establish performance standards for end-of-course or comprehensive national or international tests aligned with the existing WASL graduation test.
4. Guarantee public four-year college or university admission to students who earn a Certificate of Academic Mastery.
5. Adopt a national or international standardized assessment program to replace the WASL.

**“... our students are falling behind international standards.”**

Washington Learns, page 4

**“[We can do better than] one-size-fits-all.”**

Washington Learns, page 7

**“[The state should A]lign high school graduation requirements and college admissions standards...”**

Washington Learns, page 34

### **DIPLOMA ALTERNATIVES**

The state currently offers two graduation certificates, a Certificate of Academic Achievement and a Certificate of Individual Achievement. Two additional diplomas will provide students with incentive to stay in school and achieve their full academic potential.

The Certificate of Academic Mastery would require students to pass tests aligned with graduation course requirements based on Higher Education Coordinating Board college admission standards approved by the Legislature and Governor. Students who pass appropriate general and end-of-course achievement tests should be exempt from course attendance and performance requirements.

The Certificate of Academic Achievement would require students to complete graduation course requirements to the satisfaction of local district standards and pass a 10<sup>th</sup> grade test, the same as the existing WASL standard. Students earning a Certificate of Academic Achievement would not be required to pass the standardized tests based on college admission requirements

necessary to earn a Certificate of Academic Mastery. They would be required to meet course attendance and performance requirements.

The Certificate of Academic Completion would be awarded to students who do not earn a Certificate of Academic Mastery or Certificate of Academic Achievement; it would be awarded to those who pass alternative assessments such as collections of evidence, grade comparisons, and equivalent performance on national standardized aptitude tests (e.g., SAT, ACT). There should be only one way to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement and it should include passing a 10<sup>th</sup> grade standardized test.

The Certificate of Individual Achievement would be awarded to eligible special education students in accordance with existing state standards.

The Certificate of Academic Achievement will prepare students for family-wage jobs and the responsibilities of citizenship. The Certificate of Academic Mastery will prepare students to create the next generation of family-wage jobs and the responsibilities of community leadership. The Certificate of Academic Completion will prepare students for continuing academic and civic opportunities.

Awarding certificates of mastery or academic achievement to students who do not meet performance standards in the prescribed manner diminishes the value of the certificates earned by students who do.

Existing state statutes do not impose a single graduation standard. Not all students develop in the same way at the same time, physically or intellectually. Alternative graduation certificates will provide incentives for all students to stay in school and achieve their full academic potential.

There is no evidence to indicate the opportunity to earn alternative diplomas will diminish teacher accountability or the incentive for students to earn a Certificate of Academic Achievement or Certificate of Mastery. Students and their parents are capable of and responsible for making informed decisions. They should have instructional options that accommodate their different skills and aspirations.

## **GRADUATION TESTS**

Certificates of Academic Mastery and Certificates of Academic Achievement will be meaningful only if students meet standardized general and end-of-course test requirements. Course titles, seat time, and independent assessments are insufficient. Performance standards need to be clear and rewards for performance should be specific.

## **COLLEGE ADMISSION**

Students who earn a Certificate of Mastery should be guaranteed admission to one of the six four-year state colleges and universities. The prospect of guaranteed college admission would promote academic performance, encourage students to stay in the public school system, and establish a “seamless” educational system.

## **WASL REPLACEMENT**

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) established the value of standardized achievement tests but has limited instructional value and does not allow comparisons with other states or nations.

The WASL should be replaced with a national or international testing system that will maintain state standards, allow comparisons with competing states and nations, and make it easier to use test results to improve individual student instructional programs. A national or international test also is likely to reduce administrative time and expense. Options include the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA), the Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study (TIMSS), and the Iowa Test of Educational Development (ITED).

The use of a national or international test would not preclude the use of additional state or local assessment programs.

## **TEACHER CERTIFICATION**

1. Adopt a national standardized subject-matter teacher certification test.
2. Eliminate all other certification requirements and alternatives.
3. Prohibit classroom assignment of unqualified teachers.
4. Eliminate state oversight and certification of college teacher preparation programs.

**“The nation’s leading teacher educators... concede that there is... little empirical evidence to support the methods used to prepare the nation’s teachers.”**

Kate Walsh, President  
National Council on Teacher Quality

**“It seems hard to know who is going to be effective in the classroom until they are actually in the classroom.”**

Thomas Kane  
Professor of Education and Economics  
Harvard University

### **CERTIFICATION**

The current system of teacher preparation and certification is fundamentally flawed, with “little empirical evidence to support the methods used to prepare the nation’s teachers.”

Appropriate performance on a national test (e.g., Praxis) should be the only standard for basic teacher certification, exclusive of pedagogical skills and other matters unrelated to the command of subject matter. The use of advanced “endorsement” tests developed by the state should be limited to instructional assignments for which there are no acceptable national tests.

Local districts should retain the right to impose additional employment requirements, including pedagogical courses of instruction and knowledge. Evaluations of pedagogical skills should be separated from certification and based on student academic performance and classroom evaluations conducted by supervisors who have appropriate training and financial incentives.

Evaluations should be conducted in conjunction with periods of probationary employment or during provisional or pre-employment internships. School districts should be authorized to administer internship programs directly or enter into contracts for support services. Internships should be subject to the same employer rights and responsibilities associated with existing student-teacher programs and should be authorized for periods not to exceed one year.

Teachers lacking appropriate certifications should be prohibited from teaching classes requiring those certifications.

## **COLLEGE PROGRAMS**

According to Columbia Teachers College Dean Emeritus Arthur Levine, “[Colleges] treat teacher-preparation programs as cash cows, leading them to set low admission and graduation standards for their students.” A review of spending practices is likely to reveal our state colleges spend less per student on teacher preparation programs than they receive from the state to provide those programs.

As with existing state policy, certification should not require enrollment in or completion of any accredited or other teacher preparation program. Colleges with the best record of preparing successful teachers will thrive; others will be forced to improve or cease operations.

All state involvement in the accreditation and management of teacher preparation programs should be eliminated.

## **COMPENSATION**

1. Transfer collective bargaining authority from local school districts to the state.
2. Merge the classified school personnel system with the state personnel system.
3. Conduct school employee compensation surveys.
4. Repeal the salary increase provisions of Initiative 732.
5. Repeal the Time, Responsibility, and Incentive compensation program (TRI).
6. Repeal continuing contract protections for principals.
7. Subject continuing contract protections for teachers to collective bargaining.

**“Our education system must encourage...and reward performance.”**

Washington Learns, page 3

**“How can the legislature be accountable...for state spending if it does not have a voice in teacher salary negotiations?”**

Miller Report, page 7

**“There is a need [to determine an appropriate] collective bargaining [mechanism].”**

Washington Association of School Business Officials  
July 7, 2008 letter to the Task Force

**“Determine employee compensation allocations rationally and systematically.”**

Attaining a World Class K-12 System  
Full Funding Coalition, June 10, 2008, page 17

**“Compensation reform is a promising strategy for improving principal and subsequently school quality.”**

Dan Goldhaber, December 2007, page 2  
*Principal Compensation: More Research Needed on a Promising Reform*

**“It could be argued...that...relieving local school board[s] of any [bargaining] responsibility would simply be hastening the inevitable.”**

Doherty Report, 1973, page 23  
*State Assumption of School Costs and Collective Bargaining Structure*

**“Teachers are not all alike. They differ in their...knowledge and skills.”**

Miller Report, page 214

## **COLLECTIVE BARGAINING**

The transfer of collective bargaining from local districts to the state is essential to assure students receive equitable educational opportunities.

Local bargaining allows and encourages different compensation with no justification other than the arbitrary availability of inequitable and historically unstable local levies. Arbitrary salary disparities create an inequitable distribution of teachers and educational opportunities for students.

The recent decision by Superior Court Judge Michael Heavey establishes the principle that arbitrary salary differences are unacceptable. Salaries need not be uniform but differences must be justified, such as higher pay for teachers willing to work in challenging schools.

Existing school employee collective bargaining rights and responsibilities should be retained; however, the rights and responsibilities of the employer should be transferred from local districts to the state, including all matters pertaining to compensation, benefits, and employment terms and conditions.

Prudent management of limited state funds requires the centralized management of collective bargaining. If the state is primarily responsible for paying employees, the state must negotiate compensation, as well as terms and conditions of employment with school employees. Authority and responsibility must be aligned. Local districts would be able to use levy funds to hire additional staff compensated in accordance with agreements between the state and school employees.

State bargaining will expose the state's obligation to provide compensation sufficient to attract and retain qualified teachers and likely will minimize agreements that are inconsistent with prudent management practices. It also may minimize local conflicts between employees and managers.

State collective bargaining will increase the likelihood of establishing different pay for different labor markets, different pay for teachers with different duties and qualifications such as math and science, and incentive compensation based on student academic achievement.

## **INCENTIVE COMPENSATION**

Increasingly sophisticated and regular student performance assessments will make it possible to evaluate the performance of teachers. An incentive compensation system should award bonuses to all teachers and their supervisors in each school building based on a combination of student academic achievement and student retention in secondary schools. Lacking student retention standards, incentive compensation could compromise efforts to keep struggling students in school.

Incentive compensation for teachers may take years to implement, but incentive compensation for principals and other supervisory staff should be implemented immediately. The Legislature should appropriate funds for the purpose subject to supplemental collective bargaining agreements. Significant student performance improvements could be attained with relatively few dollars.

## **CLASSIFIED STAFF**

Classified school employees should be made part of the state personnel system, with appropriate classifications, job descriptions, and salary schedules. As with state employees, the state should enter into collective bargaining agreements with representatives selected by classified school employee groups as provided by existing statutes. State funding of compensation would be appropriated in a manner similar to that of state agencies.

## **COMPENSATION SURVEYS**

Biennial compensation surveys should include all factors a reasonable person would consider when comparing career opportunities. Surveys for teachers should identify different teaching qualifications and duties by subject area and by grade level. Surveys for all public employees should identify regional labor markets.

## **SALARY INCREASE PROVISIONS IN INITIATIVE 732**

Initiative 732 imposes teacher salary increases that should be established by collective bargaining based on compensation surveys.

## **TIME, RESPONSIBILITY, AND INCENTIVE PAY (TRI)**

TRI compensation is inequitable. Equally well-qualified teachers performing the same duties in different districts are paid different salaries with no justification other than the arbitrary availability of inequitable and historically unstable local levies. TRI pay promotes the inequitable distribution of qualified staff and educational opportunities.

The statutory prohibition on the use of TRI compensation for basic education purposes is disingenuous; TRI pay is frequently used to increase teacher base salaries without regard to additional time, responsibilities, or performance attributable to financial incentives. It must be repealed.

## **CONTINUING CONTRACTS**

Continuing contract provisions should be subject to collective bargaining. The state's responsibility to students should not be impaired by arbitrary constraints on its authority to terminate teachers unable to meet appropriate student performance standards. The availability of increasingly refined student performance information and incentive compensation for supervisors will minimize the threat of subjective and erroneous personnel evaluations.

Continuing contract protections for principals should be repealed.

## **STATE ASSISTANCE and OVERSIGHT**

1. Delegate to the Governor the authority to alter general apportionment allocations by no more than 5 percent to accommodate diverse district needs and to promote innovation.
2. Delegate to the Governor the responsibility to impose performance standards appropriate to each district and to intervene in the absence of satisfactory performance.

**“Our education system must encourage creativity and innovation...”**

Washington Learns, page 3

**“Competition sparks innovation.”**

Washington Learns, page 12

**“What is needed is much greater flexibility in both pay and staffing arrangements.”**

Doherty report, 1973, page 38

### **ASSISTANCE**

The Governor’s authority to target assistance should include but not be limited to:

- Providing enhanced staffing and related expenditures for “hard-to-staff” schools.
- Supporting alternative school and staffing models (e.g., magnet schools, math coaches).
- Providing small school district consolidation incentives.
- Directing the use of philanthropic contributions and grants awarded to the state.

The ability of the Legislature to accommodate the diverse, shifting, and evolving needs of students and to promote innovation is limited. Using statutes and budgets to provide increasingly refined programs and services is like trying to perform surgery with mittens; it just does not work very well.

The Governor should establish minimum general apportionment staffing allocations and minimum requirements no later than February 1 preceding each school year. Funds withheld for discretionary allocation should not be used for other than support of the common school system.

Discretionary expenditure authority will allow support of the many innovative programs previously initiated by local districts and encourage further innovation throughout the state.

## **OVERSIGHT**

The responsibility of the Governor to impose informed oversight and timely intervention is essential to protect the best interests of students and the state. Students must not be forced to suffer the consequences of inadequate educational programs while adults debate the merits of state versus local administrative control. Increasingly refined management information systems and student performance information will make it possible to identify problems in a timely manner.

Districts meeting student and management performance standards are likely to be granted commensurate autonomy over the conduct of district affairs.

## **FUNDING**

1. Fund two additional hours of instruction.
2. Increase appropriations for classified staffing, facilities maintenance, and Non-Employee Related Costs.
3. Limit the use of local levy funds; repeal the levy lid; eliminate levy equalization.
4. Repeal Initiative 728.
5. Eliminate the state teacher salary schedule.
6. Eliminate enriched state funding of small school districts.
7. Develop a single accounting and reporting system that separates state and local funds and improves student achievement data systems.

**“[D]evelop...a new transparent accounting...and reporting system...that separates expenditures by revenue source.”**

Washington Learns, page 49

**“Distinguish local levies from state basic education funding...to prevent commingling of local levy funds with state basic education funds.”**

Attaining a World Class K-12 System  
Full Funding Coalition 2008 Report, page 16

**“Extra education of teachers does not appear...to produce (student) achievement results, although it is a characteristic for which teachers are rewarded.”**

Miller Report, page 213

## **ENHANCED SCHOOL HOURS**

The state should fund staffing ratios to accommodate seven-hour school days for students, allowing instructional programs comparable to the State Board of Education Core 24 proposal as described in the following chart, and to hire enough teachers to accommodate a one-hour period of teacher planning, preparation, and professional development. The seven hours would comprise five hours provided in accordance with the Basic Education Act and two supplemental hours subject to appropriation. The recommended ratios in Table 3 are based on best practices recommended by the 2006 Picus and Associates report to Washington Learns, “An Evidence-Based Approach to School Finance Adequacy in Washington” and the 2007 Conley “Washington Adequacy Funding Study” for the Washington Education Association, as well as professional judgment of educators and the state Superintendent of Public Instruction.

**Table 3. Students per State-Funded Certificated Instructional Staff**

Type of Staff	Current Implicit Staffing Ratios at 6 Hours of Instruction for Students, 1 Hour Teacher Planning	Proposed Basic Education Based on 5 Hours Instruction for Students, 0 Hour Teacher Planning	Proposed Enhancement to Basic Education based on 7 Hours of Instruction for Students, 1 Hour Teacher Planning
Grade K–5 Teachers	24.7	21.2	21.2
Grade 6–12 Teachers	29.0	25.5	25.5
Instructional Coaches	1,250.0	1,000.0	1,000.0
Librarians	786.0	500.0	500.0
Counselors/Support	462.0	400.0	400.0
Nurses	2,659.0	750.0	750.0
Average for all staff, grades K–5	18.8	18.5	16.2
Average for all staff, grades 6–12	21.7	21.7	19.0

**ENHANCED CLASSIFIED STAFFING**

The state should establish classified staffing ratios based on the professional judgment of educators and education finance researchers, as shown in Table 4.

**Table 4. State-Funded Classified Staff per 1,000 Students: Basic Education**

Type of Staff	Current	Proposed
Aides (including Library Aides)	2.8	4.6
Secretaries	3.0	4.0
Central Office	4.0	4.5
Service Workers	0.9	1.1
Safety	0.1	.8
Technology	0.4	0.9
Graduation Advisor	0.0	0.3
<b>Total</b>	<b>11.2</b>	<b>16.2</b>

Combined with recommendations for categorical basic education facility maintenance staffing below, basic education classified staffing would be re-defined in total as 24.7 staff per 1,000 students instead of 17.1 staff per 1,000 students.

## FACILITIES MAINTENANCE

The state should establish standards for building maintenance and operations, including health and safety standards, and employee and non-employee expenditures necessary to maintain those standards. Pending adoption of standards, the state should increase the current allocation to \$130 per student, subsequently adjusted for inflation, as well as 1.8 facility maintenance employees, 1.6 groundskeepers, and 5.1 custodial employees per 1,000 students, as described in Table 5 below.

The allocation for supplies is based on established district expenditure patterns. The allocation for employees is based on a recommendation in the 2006 Odden-Picus report to Washington Learns. There is ample evidence of sufficiently significant deferred school district maintenance to warrant increased effort pending the Department of General Administration assessment.

When bargaining is transferred to the state, separate categorical funding for facilities maintenance should be terminated.

**Table 5. State-Funded Facilities Maintenance Staff per 1,000 Students**

Type of Staff	Current	Proposed
Custodians	4.3	5.1
Groundskeepers	0.5	1.6
Maintenance Workers	1.1	1.8
<b>Total</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>8.5</b>

## NON-EMPLOYEE RELATED COSTS (NERCs)

The state should increase the current allocation for non-salary school operating costs from \$468 to \$941 per student, subsequently adjusted for inflation, to recognize actual basic education expenditure patterns.

State allocations for non-salary costs should be defined by category, but provided for allocation purposes only.

Non-salary costs should be adjusted to reflect changes in the cost of identified objects of expenditure; allocations for energy costs, for example, should be based on the cost of energy. Non-salary funding should be a separate funding category; when bargaining is transferred to the state, separate categorical funding for NERCs should be folded into other allocations.

## **LOCAL LEVIES**

When the state fully funds basic education and local levy funds are separated and limited to other than basic education obligations, the local levy lid should be repealed and levy equalization funding eliminated. Local school district voters should be allowed to exercise discretion in determining the extent and quality of educational programs above and beyond the obligations of the state.

## **INITIATIVE 728**

Initiative 728 artificially separates a portion of school funding without guaranteeing an overall increase in spending. The initiative should be repealed, with funds transferred to general apportionment to improve staffing ratios and salary allocations.

## **TEACHER SALARY SCHEDULE**

The existing state teacher salary schedule is based on experience and educational credits. With the exception of some advanced degrees directly related to subjects being taught, there is little evidence to indicate student performance is improved by advanced degrees or additional education credits for which teachers receive salary increases. The rigidity of the salary schedule leaves little room for innovation or recognition of different labor markets. All compensation matters should be subject to collective bargaining.

## **SMALL SCHOOL DISTRICTS**

Adjusted for demographic characteristics, there is no evidence to indicate small school districts improve student performance. Enhanced funding for small school districts should be provided by local sources of revenue or state-funded economic development programs and grants, with the exception of remote districts that are necessary for the health and safety of non-district residents.

Establishing priorities is an essential obligation of elected officials. Small school district funding should be transferred to general apportionment for all districts. The transfer would be sufficient to hire 380 math and science teachers throughout the state—one for every high school—with salaries and benefits totaling \$100,000 each, significantly higher than current teacher pay.

## **ACCOUNTING, EXPENDITURE, and STUDENT DATA REPORTING**

The state must establish a “transparent accounting and reporting system that separates expenditures by revenue source” and separates basic education expenditures from non-basic education expenditures. Opaque accounting systems and the commingling of state and local funds allow the state to evade its basic education funding obligations. Only when local levy expenditures are separated from state expenditures and limited to other than state obligations will it be possible to hold the state accountable for fully funding basic education.

To improve teacher performance assessment, teachers assigned to each student should be identified by grade level or course based on standardized course descriptions and should include the performance of each student on standardized tests.

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