



## **The Full Funding Coalition's Testimony to the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance**

December 8, 2008

Chair Grimm and members of the Task Force:

I am Paul Rosier, the Executive Director of the Washington Association of School Administrators. I am speaking today on behalf of the Full Funding Coalition including the members of the executive team who could not be present on such short notice. Our coalition represents about 100,000 members of the education family who lead, manage, direct, supervise, teach, and keep our schools running for the one million young people we serve every day.

We would like to thank Task Force members Bette Hyde, Jim Kowalkowski, and Cheryl Chow for sponsoring the Full Funding Coalition's proposal to the Task Force.

Since the Task Force recommendations and report are not done, we obviously have not formally reviewed the final report as a coalition. However, our comments today reflect the thinking of our coalition beginning in January of 2008 and continuing through the ensuing months as we proposed a comprehensive system of full and equitable funding for basic education in Washington State.

The concerns we share as a coalition were outlined in a letter to the Task Force dated November 19, 2008. Of primary importance to us are the characteristics which we imbedded in our proposal and which we believe must be included in the new system. It must be comprehensive, systemic, phased in on a specific timeline, reflect a prototype school allocation model, and have the oversight of an objective commission or council established for the specific purpose of monitoring the system as it evolves.

As we began our work, we established 10 principles upon which any new K-12 finance system must be based. When the final report of the Task Force is released, we will be evaluating it based on these principles.

The system must:

1. Redefine basic education to include all expectations, goals, requirements, practices, and policies included in state and federal legislation and regulations.
2. Generate sustainable funding sufficient to address state student achievement standards.
3. Shift the focus of state school funding accountability from program compliance to student performance, and from fiscal inputs to student outcomes.
4. Distinguish local levies from state basic education funding.
5. Conceive of accountability as a two-way street.

6. Redesign existing distribution formulas and create new formulas to allocate resources in ways that ensure that every school and every district receive resources commensurate with the challenges associated with educating their specific students.
7. Review funding formulas to determine their rationality and currency, and determine all new formulas on a rational basis.
8. Make the definition of basic education dynamic and adaptive.
9. Determine all employee allocations rationally and systemically.
10. Design state and local fiscal practices so that they are consistent, transparent, and efficient.

Because of the dire circumstances we face in the next biennium, we are most concerned about not losing ground—for our children's sake—and not losing sight of the need to begin now to change our system of K-12 finance which is out-of-date, unsustainable, and unfair to our children.



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