

Resources to Address the Needs of Struggling Students

Proposal Summary

Provide funding for struggling students who need remediation in the core content areas of reading and math. The funding is based on a model of services proven to address student need. The funding would replace the current Learning Assistance Program, and remain a categorical program for allocation purposes, with components based on both poverty and on research on the number of children needing remediation. The program components address class size reduction district-wide in extreme high poverty districts, provide for a tiered set of small group tutoring with teachers for struggling students, and a foundation of support with professional development and instructional materials:

Class Size Reduction for Severe Poverty

1. **Class size reduction district-wide** – districts with 75% or greater poverty are provided additional resources for district-wide class size ratios of 1 to 15 in grades K-3 and 1 to 25 in grades 4-12. (As basic education class size is phased down to these levels, this component would be phased-out.)

Tiered Small Group Tutoring

2. **Small group intervention** – allocation to serve 10% of students, with additional funding for districts whose poverty exceeds 10%; resources provided for small-group instruction with teacher to student ratios of 1 to 8 in grades K-5 and 1 to 15 in grades 6-12.
3. **Intensive intervention** – allocation to serve 1% of students with teacher to student ratios of 1 to 3, all grades.
4. **Program support** – for every 10 teacher units generated by parts 2 and 3, an additional 1.0 FTE, with a minimum of 0.2 FTE for the smallest districts.

Foundation Support for All

5. **Professional development** – for each funded teacher unit driven by parts 1, 2, 3 and 4, additional professional development equivalent to 3 days. (As basic education professional development phases up, this component would be phased-out.)
6. **Instructional materials** – \$72 per struggling student (10% of students).

Proposal Specifics

The allocations would be based on two factors: poverty and student enrollment. Funding will cover two content areas, reading and math. Additional funding for science is not included; if adequate funding for reading and math interventions are allocated, students will have the foundational skills needed to meet standard in science, and other content areas.

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The formula would be comprised of:

1. Class Size Reduction for Severe Poverty

This component drives additional teachers for districts that have 75% or more free and reduced lunch rates to significantly reduce class size district-wide.

- Class size ratios of:
 - Grades K-3 1 to 15
 - Grades 4-12 1 to 25
 - This is in addition to funding received in parts 2-6 of this allocation.
- A hold harmless provision would be in effect for this component of the allocation, where funding would end after 2 years of not meeting the poverty threshold. (To prevent small changes in poverty from wildly changing a district's class size number of teachers the district would employ.)
- Funding would phase out as basic education is enhanced.

2. Small Group Intervention (Tier II in RTI model)

This recommendation drives additional teaching units for districts to deploy small group tutoring for students struggling with math and reading content, and includes an adjustment for poverty.

- The group-size recommendations are larger than those recommended by the RTI model:
 - 8 students in a group for elementary students
 - 15 students in a group for middle and high school students
- Sessions per week:
 - Five 30 minute sessions per week for elementary
 - Five 50 minute sessions per week for middle and high school (equal to one period/day)

Grade	Teacher to Student Ratio	Number of minutes served per day	Number of students served per day per teacher
K-5 (elementary)	1 to 8	30 minutes	80
6-12 (middle and high school)	1 to 15	50 minutes	75

- Student to staff ratios and time drive certificated staff to a district.
 - Districts deploy staff to schools and determine program model, based on district need.
- Adjustments for poverty:
 - Allocation is driven by the assumption that 10% of a district's enrollment need remediation assistance. Further, the 10% enrollment foundation is adjusted up for district poverty rates that exceed 10%. Table 1 displays the impact of the poverty adjustment factor.

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Table 1: Example if District has 1,000 Elementary Students (no Secondary Students), with Variable Poverty

Poverty	Funding Formula	Struggling Student Units	Small Group Assumption	Staff Units
4%	1,000 (students) X 1.0 (poverty factor adjusted for poverty > 10%) X 10% (base assumption of 10% need)	100	100/80*	1.25
9%	1,000 X 1.0 X 10%	100	100/80	1.25
25%	1,000 X 1.15 (25% poverty – 10% poverty) X 10%	115	115/80	1.44
55%	1,000 X 1.45 (55% poverty-10% poverty) X 10%	145	145/80	1.81

*With a small group of 8, across 5 periods per day at 30 minutes per session 1 teacher would serve 80 students per day.

3. Intensive Intervention (Tier III in RTI model)

This component is to recognize that a small portion of students, who are not eligible for special education services, need much more intensive work with a teacher in very small groups (e.g. students with 504 plan or dyslexic students). Funding is provided to reduce the pressure to inappropriately eligibilize students for special education (often pressure by parents), to obtain appropriate services for the student. This portion of the allocation is not poverty based.

- For 1% of district enrollment, intensive tutoring ratios of:
 - Grades K-12 Teacher to Student Ratio of 1 to 3
- This recognizes that the majority of the 5% of students needing intensive tutoring (i.e. in Tier III) are students with IEPs (special education students) and separate special education funding is provided for those students.

4. Program Support

Too often funding allocations do not recognize the full cost of programs. This component of the allocation addresses the need for critical program support, such as: administration, assessment of students, planning differentiated instruction and deployment of staff, and support staff.

For every 10 teacher units generated by parts 2 and 3 of the allocation, an additional 1.0 FTE would be allocated, with a minimum funding level of 0.2 FTE.

5. Professional Development

Students struggle in reading and/or math for a myriad of reasons; in a single class there will be many different student needs (i.e. phonemic awareness, decoding, numbers sense). Teachers helping these

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students need additional professional development in order to identify the specific issue and differentiate instruction to address so many possible issues.

- For each funded staff unit driven by parts 2, 3, and 4, three additional Learning Improvement Days (LID).
- Districts are currently funded for 182 days (2 LID).
- 182 days + 3 additional days = 185 days.
- Policy assumption – these additional days would be required to be used for the teacher units generated in the allocation.
- As basic education funding for professional development ramps up, these days would phase-out.

6. Instructional Materials

This component funds the cost of additional instructional materials needed for classroom diagnostic and screening assessments remediation of students. The per student amount is based on current instructional material pricing lists¹ from successful models like Reading First.

- Includes components for:
 - Student materials
 - Teacher materials
 - Classroom materials

Formula Comparison

Table 2 identifies the number of staffing units generated by the following recommendations compared to current funding and that recommended by other researchers.

Table 2: Comparison of the number of staff units funded for struggling students:

Finance Study/Proposal	Number of Teacher Units (FTEs)	Number of Students That Can Be Served in the Proposed SPI Model Given Respective Funding Assumptions
Current LAP Funding	1,439	68,575
Superintendent's Recommendation to Basic Education Finance Task Force	5,740	273,468
Picus and Odden for WA Learns	3,608	171,885
Conley, 2007	7,216	343,771

Policy Proposal

This recommendation continues to define LAP as a categorical program. Educators in the workgroup that developed this proposal felt strongly that the resources will not be directed to the poorest and

¹ <http://www.k12.wa.us/CurriculumInstruct/reading/ReadingProgMasterPriceAgrmnt.aspx>

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most struggling students unless they are earmarked as such. Educators reported anecdotally that students with the greatest needs often get too few resources because these students have the fewest and least powerful advocates. This recommendation continues to define the LAP as a categorical program, available only for assistance to struggling students, but does not mandate allocations by school.

Background and Historical Funding and Practice in Washington

To earn a high school diploma, a student must meet state standards in reading, writing and mathematics content areas of the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) or demonstrate achievement of state standards in these same content areas using alternative assessments or methods. From educational, moral and legal standpoints, the state must provide all students a reasonable opportunity to learn the state standards. Opportunity to learn, as outlined in case law, consists of ample prior notice to students of the requirement(s), the alignment of the state assessment(s) to the state standards, substantial opportunities for students to retake the assessment(s) and sufficient opportunities for students to participate in instructional remediation targeted at students' academic deficiencies.

Historically Washington has provided an allocation for struggling students, students who need remediation in reading and math, the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). The LAP program provides interventions for students not meeting standard in reading and/or math. The current allocation is based on district poverty (free and reduced lunch percentages, FRPL); with an additional enhancement for districts whose poverty rate exceeds 40%. The 2008 Legislative Session added an English Language Learner (ELL) enhancement (beginning in school year 2008-2009) to the LAP program for districts whose poverty rate exceeds 40% and has more than 20% ELL students.

For the 2006-07 and 2007-08 school years Washington provided resources for each 11th and 12th grade student for extra remediation tied specifically to not meeting standard on one or more of the WASL content areas via the Promoting Academic Success program (PAS). Beginning with the 2008-09 school year, the PAS was eliminated and most of this resource was transferred to LAP. The LAP allocation for school year 2007-2008 is \$228, and increases to \$286 for school year 2008-2009. While the transfer was nearly-neutral (a \$3 million reduction statewide), the impact on districts varied significantly; districts with lower poverty but average or high rates of students not meeting standard lost resources.

Current funding in Washington is based on 3.46 certificated staff per 1,000 students eligible for FRPL (plus adjustments for concentration for some districts), and bears no relationship to a model of services that could be provided with an expectation of improved student learning.

Research on Remediation Models

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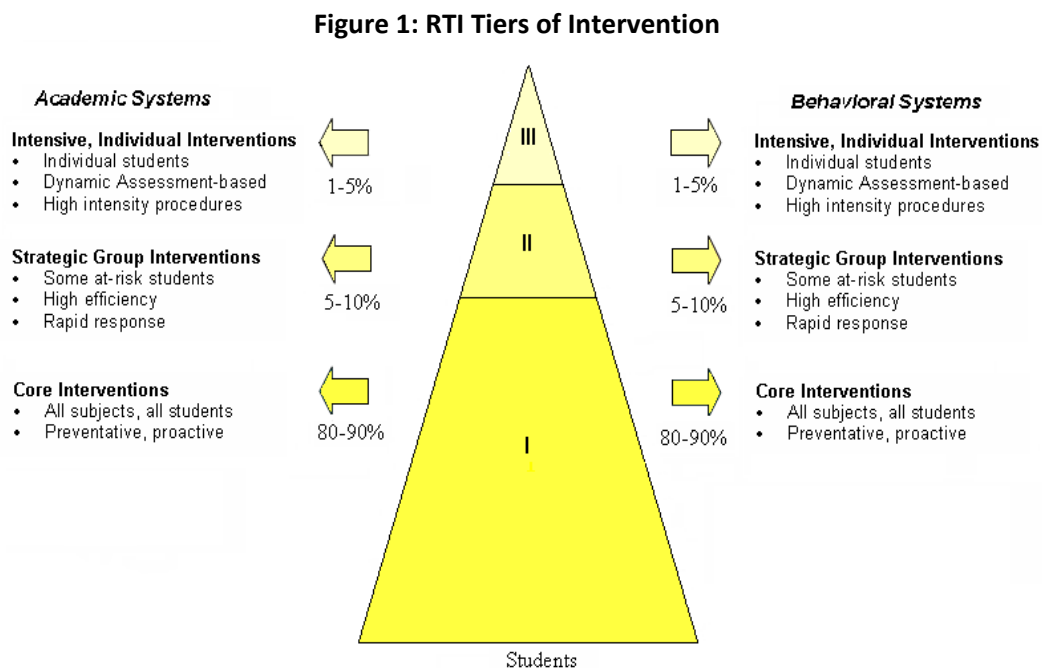
While there are many successful programs that address the needs of underachieving students, the two programs that the workgroup used to base these recommendations on are the federal Reading First program and the Response to Intervention Model (RTI).

The federal Reading First Program's results, which targets funding to high poverty districts and schools, provide data² that irrefutably proves that districts and schools who receive adequate funding for reading remediation show student assessment results that far outpace other districts, in even the lowest poverty and highest need schools.

Response to Intervention (RTI) is one research-proven model and is used here as a funding model but not a mandate for service delivery. Based on the RTI model, which is supported by scientifically based research³, an average 10% of a district's students need small group tutoring (i.e. Tier II in RTI).

- RTI, Tier II, recommends small group tutoring of:
 - Grades K-5 3 to 6 students in a group
 - Grades 6-12 6 to 12 students in a group
- RTI recommends 3-4 sessions per week at 30-60 minutes per session
- Additionally, on average 5% of a district's students need intensive tutoring (i.e. Tier III in RTI)
 - Grades K-12 1 to 3

Figure 1, shown below displays the RTI tiers of intervention upon which this funding model is based:



² Reading First Report: Response to the Reading First Impact Study: Interim Report (Draft), OSPI, 2008.

³ See <http://www.k12.wa.us/SpecialEd/RTI.aspx>

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In addition to using information from intervention models, other school finance research was reviewed. The following are recommendations made by other school finance studies for Washington State’s struggling students:

Research Summary	
School Finance Researchers	
Picus/Odden for Wa Learns	<p>References one-to-one teacher tutors as the most effective strategy to help struggling students.</p> <p>Reviews of the most effective programs identify that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Professional teachers are the best tutors • Tutoring should initially provided to students on a one-to-one basis • Tutors must be trained in specific tutoring strategies • Tutoring must be tightly aligned to the regular curriculum and to the specific learning challenges, with appropriate content specific scaffolding and modeling • Sufficient time must be provided for the tutoring • Programming should be highly structured <p>Recommend 1.0 tutor FTE for every 100 students eligible for free and reduced poverty, with a minimum of one in every prototypical school.</p>
Conley, 2007	Recommends 1 teacher unit for each 50 poverty student FTEs.

Washington Resources Compared to Other States and School Finance Recommendations

Picus/Odden’s recommendations for struggling students drive 3,608 teacher staffing units (see Table 2). These recommendations for struggling students assume that other recommended basic education foundational resources, such as full day kindergarten, smaller classes and appropriate curriculum, are also funded. Conley’s 2007 recommendation would drive 7,216 staff units (see Table 2).

In contrast, Washington’s LAP funding will drive 1,439 staff units in the 2008-09 school year (after the increases associated with the transfer of PAS funding to the program).

While we do not know how much Washington districts spend in total on remediation of students (due to accounting policies that require districts to match expenditures to categorical state and federal programs, and incentives to code teachers to basic education), we know anecdotally that districts are not able to provide the appropriate level of services to students in need of remediation.

The current LAP allocation is equal to 5% of the average basic education allocation (BEA). Based on a survey of other states, Washington State’s LAP funding as a percentage of BEA is significantly lower than all other states surveyed.

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Table 3: Per Student Funding for Remediation in School Year 2007-2008 (based on phone interviews in April 2008):

	Washington	Oregon	Texas	Colorado	New Jersey
Lap/Poverty	\$228	\$997	\$650	\$908	\$4,535
LAP/Poverty funding as % of BEA (WA) or general education	5%	25%	20%	14%	47%