2023 Legislative Priorities

"Educational equity can only exist when a student's level of opportunity and achievement cannot be predicted based on race, characteristics, or circumstances. Therefore, we must identify and eliminate any discriminatory practices and prejudices within our state's public education system."

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is comprised of the state's 1,477 locally-elected school board directors who serve their communities and 1.1 million students. WSSDA contributes to building the future of public education by advocating to close student opportunity and achievement gaps. We do this by working to advance the policy, governance, and budgetary priorities of Washington's 295 school districts. The legislature has been supportive in response to the persistent and pandemic-related needs of our students, for which we are grateful. We look forward to working with you to continue progress on this commitment to our students, schools, and communities.

Meet the Requirements for Special Education

School districts are eager to equitably meet the needs of students by implementing the state and federal requirements for special education - but do not receive the resources to do so. We ask the legislature to invest fully in the mandatory services for eligible students, expand access to inclusionary practices, remove the artificial cap, eliminate application penalties, and recognize that costs vary for every district based on the uniqueness of each student and community.

Provide the Needed Resources for Ample, Equitable and Stable Education

School districts are expected to implement all aspects of Washington's program of basic education including graduation requirements. In order to do so effectively, schools must have more qualified adults in classrooms and buildings. To recruit and retain the best staff, including building administrators, schools must provide compensation increases equitably across all positions. We ask the legislature to:

- Stabilize district operations and program obligations;
- Amply and equitably fund staff and programs, based on student need, to close opportunity and achievement gaps;
- Advance Career and Technical Education programming; and
- Work to close regionalization factor gaps between adjacent districts.

Feed Students

Learning cannot occur when students are hungry. School meal programs should meet the diverse backgrounds, preferences, and experiences of all students. We ask the legislature to ensure that no student is hungry during the school day by providing universal free and nutritious school meals.

Construct Safe and Healthy Schools

When teaching and learning occur in safe and healthy environments, students are more likely to experience academic success. We ask the legislature to protect students and staff by securing their physical, social, emotional safety through an updated and relevant school construction formula and by engaging students in decision-making, increasing parent notification, and expanding staff training.

Transport Each and Every Student

Many students and families rely on school district transportation to access basic education. The real cost to maintain staff and equipment requires an update to the Student Transportation Allocation formula. We ask the legislature to provide equitable access to basic education by covering all costs related to student transportation.

For questions about WSSDA's Advocacy, contact strategicadvocacy@wssda.org.

The Washington State School Directors' Association (WSSDA) is a **state agency** comprised of Washington's 1,477 locally-elected school directors representing 1.2 million students. With input from their communities, staff, students, parents and families, school boards establish WSSDA's **positions**. Like the legislative process, directors develop, debate on, and adopt those positions to inform the organization's advocacy platform.

Two Bodies, One Democratic Process

Just as bills are introduced by locally elected legislators, WSSDA positions are introduced by locally elected school directors. The formal adoption for both follows the same democratic process. Here is a side-by-side comparison:

How a bill becomes a law in WA Legislature	How a proposal becomes a WSSDA position
State legislators are elected by a majority of voters within their legislative district	Local school directors are elected by a majority of voters within their school district
A legislator brings forward a bill to represent the interests of their constituents	A school board brings forward a proposal to represent the interests of their district and community
The bill is assigned to a committee where there is discussion and may be amendments	The proposal is assigned to a committee where there is discussion and may be amendments with the approval of the submitting school board
To become law, the bill must ultimately go to a vote of the full legislative body	To become a position, the proposal must go to a vote of the full General Assembly (one voting delegate from each school district)
With a majority vote, the bill passes	With a majority vote, the proposal passes
The bill becomes law and citizens must follow that law based on the majority vote	The position becomes a WSSDA position and WSSDA advocates according to its contents *However, nothing prohibits an individual district from advocating with legislators, contrary to the position passed by the majority at the General Assembly*
Any law can be changed during a future legislative session following this process	Any position could be changed during a future General Assembly following this process