

Ample, Equitable, and Stable Public Education



Public Education is the foundation of a healthy and productive society with a well-equipped workforce.

It is imperative to secure the resources needed to support effective instruction and safe, welcoming schools to provide our students with the best possible educational outcomes.

What is an Ample, Equitable, and Stable Public Education System?

An ample, equitable, and stable public education system ensures sufficient funding and resources are allocated to meet the diverse needs of students, thereby closing opportunity and achievement gaps.

An ample, equitable, and stable, public education system involves:



Amplify funding educational programs, materials, and the classroom, building, administrative, support, and maintenance staffing needed to fulfill student requirements.



Addressing disparities between neighboring districts as recommended by the 2022 K-12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee.



Expanding Career and Technical Education and Dual Credit opportunities.



Ensuring facilities are modern, sustainable and provide a healthy and safe environment.



Providing universal access to early learning.



Having support services to reduce barriers to learning.

Ultimately, an ample, equitable, and stable public education system aims to eliminate unequal access to funding across the state, sustainably promoting fairness and equal educational opportunities for all students.

Why is it important?

An ample, equitable, and stable public education system enables us to move beyond meeting basic needs to creating a public education system that is transformative, innovative, and enables our children to thrive now and in the future.

01

Closing Achievement Gaps

Adequate and fair funding based on student needs is crucial to narrowing gaps in student performance. In Washington, there are differences in how well students do in school based on their unique characteristics and circumstances. By targeting funding and support where it's most needed, we can help *all* students succeed. ^{1 2 3}

02

Eliminating Opportunity Gaps

Fair funding means that every school gets the resources it needs, no matter where it is or who goes there, which helps ensure everyone has an equal chance to get an effective education. ⁴

03

Career and Technical Education (CTE) for Future Jobs

Supporting innovative CTE programs is about preparing students for jobs in the future. As jobs change and new ones appear, we want to ensure students have the skills they need to get those jobs. ^{5 6}

04

Starting School Right

Keeping the Transition to Kindergarten program helps children be ready to start K-12. Early education is essential for doing well in school later on, and this program helps make sure everyone has a good start. ⁷

05

Removing the Need for Levy Funding

We want to ensure that all school districts have equitable opportunities to serve their students. Right now, some schools can get additional dollars from their communities while others cannot. Levies would be unnecessary if all districts were funded adequately by the state and federal government.

06

Success for All Students

As a state, we agreed that free education was of paramount duty. All students will do better when we equitably invest in our schools. More students graduate, go to college, and are ready for the workforce when we invest in our schools which helps our state economy and culture. ^{8 9 10}

07

Great Teachers and Staff

Ample funding means we can pay our teachers and staff well and enable them to improve their work. This is important to attract and retain high-quality talent to ensure effective teachers and staff are available where need is greatest. ¹¹

08

Good for Our State

When we demonstrate our commitment to a fair and equitable public education system, our students and state thrive. People and businesses are more likely to want to come to our state, which means more opportunities for everyone. An ample, equitable, and stable public education system will allow the tax base to increase and reduce expenses for social services and law enforcement. ¹²

What could the state of Washington do to establish a stable public education system with ample and equitable funding?



We can take several steps to create a stable public education system in Washington with fair, ample, and stable funding. The Legislature could build a system that funds the current needs of our schools, perform updates to the system as necessary to ensure the equitable distribution of resources, and continually explore alternative funding sources.

Early childhood education programs, like pre-K and full-day kindergarten, could be expanded to ensure all students have a strong start. The state could support struggling schools and students through targeted, research-based approaches.

Offering competitive pay and professional development for educators and administrators, sustainable class sizes and supports is essential to attract and retain quality educators.

Building partnerships between schools, communities, agencies, nonprofits, and businesses can provide extra support. Regular assessment of funding and outcomes should be implemented for transparency, modification, and accountability.

These actions can help establish a stable and well-funded public education system in the state of Washington.

What can school board members do to advocate for ample, equitable funding for a stable public education system?



- ✔ Meet with your superintendent to familiarize yourself with where the state funding system is falling short of meeting the needs of the schools in your district.
- ✔ Connect each need to an impact on student experience and outcomes, as well as on the overall health and vitality of your community and the state.
- ✔ Schedule meetings with your legislators to share the impacts of their decision-making.
 - Share connections you found between equitable education and teaching and learning. Consider having positive examples to contrast with your negative anecdotes.
 - Meet regularly with your legislators throughout the year. Invite them to your schools to observe classrooms and meet staff and students.
- ✔ Engage students in the advocacy process. Students can also meet with legislators and provide testimony during the legislative session.
- ✔ Provide legislative updates and advocacy work during regular board meetings throughout the year to keep the board, staff, and community informed and engaged.
- ✔ Engage local media, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), parent-teacher associations (PTAs), and leverage social media in the awareness and advocacy process.

Do you need additional ideas on accurately and persuasively communicating the importance of ample, equitable, and stable public education to your legislator?

✉ Please reach out to us at strategicadvocacy@wssda.org

Supporting Research

¹ Baker, B.D. (2022) How money matters for schools, Learning Policy Institute. Available at: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/how-money-matters-report> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

² Martin, C., Benner, M. and Baffour, P. (2018) A quality approach to school funding, Center for American Progress. Available at: <https://www.americanprogress.org/article/quality-approach-school-funding/> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

³ UW Policy Brief by David Knight et al. Also Education Law Center 2023 Making the Grade

⁴ Tyner, A., Griffith, D. and Gadfly, T.E. (2023) THINK AGAIN: Is education funding in America still unequal?, The Thomas B. Fordham Institute. Available at: <https://fordhaminstitute.org/national/research/think-again-education-funding-america-still-unequal> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

⁵ Flynn, E. (2021) What is Career and Technical Education, and why does it matter?, Education Northwest. Available at: <https://educationnorthwest.org/insights/what-career-and-technical-education-and-why-does-it-matter> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

⁶ Frazier, K. (2022) The value of CTE: Career and Technical Education Facts and Statistics, Kai XR. Available at: <https://www.kaixr.com/post/career-and-technical-education-facts-and-statistics> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

⁷ Morgan, I. (2022) Equal is Not Good Enough, The Education Trust. Available at: <https://edtrust.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/09/Equal-Is-Not-Good-Enough-December-2022.pdf> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

⁸ Data shows students with a high school degree earn on average \$45,000 vs. \$75,000 for a student with a bachelor's degree (16 years after high school graduation).

⁹ Johnson, R. (2023) School Funding Effectiveness: Evidence from California's local control funding formula, Learning Policy Institute. Available at: <https://learningpolicyinstitute.org/product/school-funding-effectiveness-ca-lcff-report> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

¹⁰ Barrett, K. (2018) The evidence is clear: More money for schools means better student outcomes, NEA. Available at: <https://www.nea.org/nea-today/all-news-articles/evidence-clear-more-money-schools-means-better-student-outcomes> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

¹¹ Allegretto, S. (2023) Teacher pay penalty still looms large: Trends in teacher wages and compensation through 2022, Economic Policy Institute. Available at: <https://www.epi.org/publication/teacher-pay-in-2022/#full-report> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).

¹² Frank, S. and Hovey, D. (2014) Return on investment in Education - Education Resource Strategies, ERS. Available at: <https://www.erstrategies.org/cms/files/2466-return-on-investment-in-education.pdf> (Accessed: 12 December 2023).