



Legislative Priorities 2011

Helping all students succeed

WSSDA is committed to improving achievement for all students. We recognize and understand the next biennium represents unprecedented challenges to the state's financial stability. As decision makers consider policy and budget options, we ask them to prioritize strategies that have the least impact on our K-12 students. We believe the following represent positions necessary to best support our public schools:

Local Effort Assistance

LEA plays a role in the operating budgets of nearly 75 percent of school districts across the state. In particular, changes in FY11 could have a serious impact on districts that have already factored LEA/levy equalization into their current budget and contracts. These districts don't have an option of going to voters for additional funds or drawing on reserves to make up the difference. Changes midstream could be serious.

In addition, under SHB 2776, the Legislature created the Levy and Local Effort Assistance Technical Working Group, which is charged with developing options for a new system of supplemental school funding through local school levies and LEA, and with recommending a phase-in plan so no school district suffers a decrease in funding due to implementation of a new system of supplemental funding. The report is due June 2011, so to make statutory or structural changes in advance of the Work Group's deliberations and consideration by the Quality Education Council could result in unintended consequences.

School directors' top legislative priorities for 2011

Local Effort Assistance

WSSDA opposes decreases in LEA, which could have a serious impact on districts that have already factored it into current budget and contracts.

Unfunded mandates

WSSDA continues to oppose new unfunded mandates and seeks remedies to existing unfunded and underfunded mandates.

Education finance and WSSDA involvement

WSSDA supports the funding and implementation of basic education as outlined in ESHB 2261 and further described in SHB 2776.

Consolidation/erosion of districts

WSSDA believes consolidation of districts should occur only by a vote of the affected citizens and not by legislative mandate.



Unfunded mandates

Creating a list of unfunded mandates that everyone agrees on eliminating or suspending is difficult, however WSSDA continues to oppose new unfunded mandates and seeks remedies to existing unfunded and underfunded mandates.

Our school districts are using prudent fiscal management and innovative

strategies to stretch state dollars farther and meet the diverse needs of students. Imposing additional requirements in these tough budget times hinders districts' abilities to be innovative and takes away from their primary responsibility of helping all students make academic progress and achieve success.

Education finance and WSSDA involvement

WSSDA supports the funding and implementation of basic education as outlined in ESHB 2261 and further described in SHB 2776. Several school directors are active members of various work groups, sharing their technical and practical expertise to advise and resolve challenging education issues.

We recognize the budget difficulties posed by the phased implementation of SHB 2776 and other education

continued on reverse

funding commitments. WSSDA will seek opportunities to be involved and engaged in all funding discussions and issues affecting school districts, and to offer and review options to create sustainable funding.

Consolidation/erosion of school districts

We acknowledge that there is a perception that consolidating school districts may result in cost savings and efficiencies. However, reports as recent as the 2010 JLARC study have shown that the cost savings would be minimal while the harm to communities could be significant. WSSDA agrees that a different “c” — collaboration — through shared services should continue to be pursued. However WSSDA members believe that consolidation of districts should occur only through a process of voting by the affected citizens and not by legislative mandate.

Note: The actual language of each of these requests, as adopted by the WSSDA Legislative Assembly in September 2010, is available at wssda.org or from the WSSDA Olympia office.

School funding philosophy

Providing quality public education to the children of Washington is essential to the well-being of our state and its citizens ... today and into the future.

This responsibility is clearly proclaimed in our Washington Constitution as the state’s paramount duty. School funding must be stable, sufficient and equitable in order to achieve maximum results and efficiencies. Local levies should only enhance and never replace the financial responsibility of the state.

Demands of public education continue to increase. All students can learn, but the cost of educating students increases with their individual needs. In particular, students with special needs comprise a growing share of the student population; their needs are expensive.

Quality staff, a rich array of programs, and all support or incidental services must be funded properly.

Local school boards are in partnership with the state — a partnership based on trust and commitment to provide the best possible education for all children in Washington, to ensure the common good ... today and into the future.

While not technically a legislative position, this philosophy guides our members and the WSSDA staff as we work cooperatively with state officials on the wide variety of school funding issues.

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders ... The Legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public schools.

Constitution of the State of Washington,
Article IX – Education



The Washington State School Directors’ Association provides leadership, advocacy and services to support public school directors’ efforts to improve student learning.

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