



2020 Legislative Priorities

State funding does not cover the actual cost of basic education programming for North Thurston Public Schools. During the upcoming legislative session we urge legislators to address the following education issues:

Learning Supports for Students

Special Education

Increase Special Education funding. The percentage of students who qualify for Special Education services has increased as our enrollment has grown. Joint Base Lewis McChord is also a compassionate assignment for service men and women who have children with special needs. Approximately 14.82 percent of enrolled students qualify for Special Education services; further, many students are highly impacted and require additional staff to provide them with a free and appropriate public education. Last year we served 2,148 students in Special Education. The revenue received in programs 3121 and 4121 totaled nearly \$22.2 million while actual expenditures were over \$29 million. Therefore, our local levy covered nearly \$7 million. It costs us, on average, \$13,604 per Special Education student (FTE). Our anticipated shortfall will be almost \$7.6 million for the 2019-20 school year. We are grateful for the increase in Special Education funding for the 2019-20 school year due to the legislative change in the funding formula multiplier from .9609 to .995; however, we will still need 22.9 percent of our local levy to cover the shortfall in Special Education funding.

Social Emotional Learning

Increase the funding for schools to hire staff to support the social and emotional needs of students. Support the engagement of families in culturally relevant and authentic ways, allowing schools to implement a comprehensive system of support for all students. Fully fund the statewide network of comprehensive safety supports for school districts that was put in place by the 2019 Legislature.

Underfunded Staffing

Positions	Funded	Employed	Gap
Counselors	30.265	36.62	-6.355
Mental Health	.993	10.31	-9.317
Nurses	2.417	8.2	-5.783
School Psychologists	.405	18.0	-17.595
School Resource Officers	2.885	3.23 + 4 (contracted)	-4.345

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Attracting and Retaining Quality Teachers and Support Staff

Sustain the current regionalization funding level of 1.06 rather than decreasing it beginning in 2020-21. The current funded salary for 2019-20 is below the actual average salary and with the regionalization reduction, the gap will continue to increase over the next three years. Please revisit the State’s staffing funding model to include the actual education and experience level of our certified staff rather than funding certified staff based upon a state-wide average. Also, provide funding for the School Employee Benefit Program (SEBB) to match the actual cost of the program implementation. SEBB expanded access to a full-time benefit for part-time employees; we recognize that it is important for employees to have affordable health care coverage; yet, the cost of providing this added benefit is above what the District receives in state funding for SEBB implementation.

Early Learning

Increase funding for preschool programs. Approximately 47 percent of students in North Thurston Public Schools are Kindergarten Ready based upon the Washington Kindergarten Inventory of Developing Skills. Therefore, 53 percent are enrolling without skills in all six of the domains as assessed by our Kindergarten teachers. Within our attendance area, 566 students qualified for state-funded preschool, but 408 were not served in 2018-19. The lack of access to preschool is the reason children are not served. Children who begin Kindergarten behind their peers often qualify for intervention services in reading, math, and social skills development. With appropriate services available for preschool programming, students would achieve in the areas of math and English language arts at the same level as their peers by the end of third grade. The funding needed to serve 408 preschool students is \$3,675,672 for half-day or \$5,107,752 for full-day. In addition, there is a shortage of preschool facilities in our District’s attendance area; please provide capital construction funding to support community-based preschool programs.



By the Numbers

15,100 students enrolled (PreKindergarten - 12th Grade)		8 Schools of Distinction Awards	120 + National Board Certified Teachers
22 schools	2,000 employees	91% Graduation Rate <i>*5-year graduation rate</i>	