

Legislative News

Education Funding in the State of Washington – PTA Members, We Have a Crisis

The Washington State Legislature has formed a Task Force to develop a new system for the delivery and funding of K-12 education in this state. Despite changes in expectations, the model for education funding has not been changed for 30 years. Washington State PTA and many other organizations throughout the state are deeply concerned about the crisis in K-12 education funding in our state. In fact WSPTA is working on these concerns this year – now!

Is there a crisis? Some facts to consider

1. In general, the state funds K-12 education on a per pupil basis. The average per pupil allocation from the state *does not cover the actual cost*.
2. The state allocation pays for only 5 class periods per day. Most school districts offer students 6 or 7 periods per day. They pay for those additional periods out of levy and other funds.
3. The state legislature has passed a number of mandates, but provided *no additional funding* for school districts to comply. For example, unfunded mandates for a neighboring school district (Northshore) cost that district almost \$17 million or approximately 10% of their \$172.6 million budget.
4. When the state's allocation doesn't cover the actual costs, some districts make up the difference with levy funds, foundation funds, or PTA fundraisers. Not all school districts in the state can raise the same amount of funds to make up the difference, so *not all Washington State students are receiving the same basic level of services*.
5. Larger class sizes are not just a problem in your school district. Washington State ranks 46th, *fourth worst in class sizes*. (Source: NEA Ranking and estimates)
6. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has currently placed *7 school districts under Binding Conditions* for the 2007-08 school year. This means that these districts could not cover their bills for the year. There have never been this many school districts so close to bankruptcy in the memory of OSPI officials.

Are you concerned? The single most important thing you can do is to get informed and engaged. Start by talking with xxx School District about their concerns (like the costs of unfunded mandates), then help us to spread the word. Our kids are depending on it.

Important Dates

October 3-4: WSPTA Legislative Assembly, Olympia, WA

October 7: School District Board of Directors meeting, ESD Board Room, 4:30pm

October 21: School District Board of Directors meeting, ESD Board Room, 4:30pm

November 4: Election Day! Don't forget to vote!

xxx High School is represented in the Legislature by {Insert District legislators:

Senator xxx, phone: 360-786-xxxx, email: xxx@leg.wa.gov

Rep. xxx, phone: 360-786-xxxx, email: xxx@leg.wa.gov}

{Insert} School Board members can be contacted at: 425-nnn-xxxx

{add school board director names}

For more information, please contact your Legislative Chair.