



2017 SESSION: Legislative Priorities

A high-quality education system that prepares all students for college, career, and life.

The State Board of Education believes that these priorities are currently the most mission-critical to lead the development of state policy for K-12 education, provide effective oversight of public schools, and advocate for student success.

Resolve McCleary Implementation

Fully implement ESHB 2261 and SHB 2776; make ample provision for basic education programs, and eliminate the state's unconstitutional reliance on local levies.

Washington's Supreme Court was clear in its McCleary decision of 2012 that the state has failed to make ample provision for public schools, as required by Article IX of the state constitution. Additionally, the Court was clear that reliance on local dollars to support basic education programs and salaries is impermissible. The 2017 Legislature is requested to define the constitutionally permissible uses of local maintenance and operations levies and increase state funding to ensure that basic education programs and compensation of school district staff for basic education duties are fully funded from dependable state sources, and not from local levies. *Additionally, the Legislature is requested to restore funding enhancements to per pupil allocations provided for career and technical education.* These actions will both bring the state into compliance with a key finding in McCleary and dramatically improve the equity of the state's school funding system. The K-12 system cannot close the opportunity and achievement gaps and ensure a high-quality education for all students unless the state fully funds its program of basic education.

End Biology End of Course as a Diploma Requirement*

Immediately eliminate the biology End-of-Course exam as a high school graduation requirement, and replace it with a comprehensive science assessment aligned with the Washington State Science Learning Standards (i.e., Next Generation Science Standards), when it becomes available.

Expand Assessment Alternatives*

Expand assessment alternatives for high school graduation, including successful completion of state-approved transition courses and dual credit courses.

Provide Professional Learning for Educators*

The 2017 Legislature is requested to include ten days, or 60 hours, of professional development in the state's program of basic education and require that all professional learning funded by state basic education allocations be designed to meet the standards for high-quality professional learning established in RCW 28A.300.602. Ensuring that all students are prepared for career and college requires sustained, state-funded time for professional learning outside of the 180-day school calendar. Renewed state support for professional learning will ease the strain on families and children from the proliferation of partial school days, reverse the erosion of instructional time from the state's abandonment of this responsibility, and promote equity for districts less able to support this necessary activity through local levies.

* Recommended reform strategy in the SBE's 2016 biennial report on the K-12 system's educational health.

Strengthen Career Readiness and Fortify the High School and Beyond Plan in the Program of Basic Education for All Students*

The career- and college-ready graduation requirements directed by the Legislature in 2014 make the High School and Beyond Plan essential to the state's new high school diploma. In order to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality High School and Beyond Plan, the Legislature is requested to define and fund the following minimum elements of the plan:

- Identification of career goals
- Identification of educational goals in support of anticipated career and life goals
- A four-year plan for course-taking aligned with career and educational goals
- Identification of assessments needed to earn a diploma and achieve postsecondary goals.

The Board also urges legislation that requires the development of career readiness standards for all students, as a guide for K-12 curricula and a support for students, parents and counselors.

Strengthen Expanded Learning Opportunities*

Establish, fund, and increase access to high-quality expanded learning opportunities for historically underserved students and students that are credit-deficient and not on track for on-time graduation. Summer learning loss widens achievement gaps and reduces academic results for economically disadvantaged students. The Legislature should support expanded learning opportunities that align with the quality indicators designed by the Expanded Learning Opportunity Council pursuant to SSB 6163.

Remedy Teacher Shortage and Align and Enhance Educator Compensation and Credentialing

Identify and fund additional effective strategies to address the multi-faceted problem of teacher shortages.

The Legislature is requested to align the new system of professional certification with a new model of professional compensation based on the career ladder compensation model recommended by the Compensation Technical Work Group.

* Recommended reform strategy in the SBE's 2016 biennial report on the K-12 system's educational health.