



2016 SESSION: Legislative Priorities

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

Career & College-Ready Diploma Requirements

End the Biology End-of-Course exam as a graduation requirement and adopt a comprehensive science assessment. Expand alternatives to assessments for high school graduation.

Legislative Action: The Board urges the Legislature not just to suspend but to end the biology end-of-course exam as a high school graduation requirement, effective with the class of 2018. A comprehensive science assessment aligned with Next Generation Science Standards should be administered according to the schedule for the assessment developed by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Board urges the Legislature to expand and fund alternatives for students who do not pass the high school SBAC test required for graduation, beginning with the Class of 2019, to include successful completion of transition courses and dual credit courses.

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.

Legislative Action: The Washington 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 2016 Legislature must 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. 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.

Professional Learning for Educators

Incorporate state-funded time for educator professional learning into the state's program of basic education.

Legislative Action: Ensuring that all students are prepared for college and career 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. The 2016 Legislature should begin the phase-in of the equivalent of 10 funded days for educator professional learning, within the state's program of basic education. In accordance, the Legislature should adopt a statewide definition and standards for effective professional learning aligned to state and district goals.



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Align Educator Compensation Systems with New Credentialing Policies and Address Educator Shortages

Joint Priority with Professional Educator Standards Board

Legislative Action: ESHB 2261 (2009) directed the development of an enhanced salary allocation model that aligns state expectations for educator development and certification with the compensation system and a plan for implementation. In its 2013 report the Quality Education Council proposed a new career ladder model for educator compensation, linked to the two levels of certification defined by the Professional Educator Standards Board, with recognition of experience, degree attainment and National Board certification, but significantly fewer “steps” than the current schedule. The Board urges the Legislature to adopt legislation that aligns the new system of professional certification with a new model of professional compensation. The Board also asks the Legislature to support systemic measures proposed by the Professional Educator Standards Board and the Superintendent of Public Instruction, in partnership with school districts, Educational Service Districts, and higher education, to address a persistent and multifaceted problem of educator shortages.

Expanded Learning Opportunities

Increase access to and fund high-quality expanded learning opportunities

Legislative Action: In its legislatively mandated report on educational system health for 2014, the Board summarized research showing that many students experience significant learning losses when they do not engage in educational activities during the summer, and that summer learning loss widens achievement gaps and reduces academic results for economically disadvantaged students. The Board therefore recommended increased access to high-quality, expanded learning opportunities among reforms to improve system health. The Board urges the 2016 Legislature to establish and fund a program of expanded learning opportunities for disadvantaged students.

High School & Beyond Plan

Strengthen and fund the High School and Beyond Plan to support career and college ready graduation requirements.

Legislative Action: 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. The Board urges the Legislature to define and fund the following minimum elements of the High School and Beyond Plan in order to ensure that every student has access to a high-quality 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.

School districts should retain flexibility to add any local requirements deemed appropriate and to tailor plans and procedures to student needs.