



The Washington State Board of Education

An education system where students are engaged in personalized education pathways that prepare them for civic engagement, careers, postsecondary education, and lifelong learning.

Legislative Priorities

PREPARED FOR THE JULY 2020 BOARD MEETING

Information item

Materials included in packet

- COVID-19 Policy Response & Legislative Priorities Memo
- Legislator panelist bios

Synopsis

This segment will begin with a legislative panel including Senator Wellman (Chair, Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee), Representative Santos (Chair, House Education Committee), and Representative Steele (Ranking Minority Member, House Education Committee). Panelists will share with the Board about education policy proposals in response to the coronavirus situation, followed by an opportunity for Q&A.

Questions for panelists:

- What do you see as some of the most pressing education challenges to address in light of the coronavirus situation?
- What are some of your plans for next session (or special session) to address these challenges?
- How can the Board help address these challenges?
- What feedback do you have on the policy proposals that the Board is considering?

Following the panel, staff will provide an overview of legislative priorities under development, focusing on the most urgent requests to consider in the event of a special session. The Board will consider and discuss legislative request options, and provide staff with direction on which proposals to move forward.

Legislator panelist bios

Senator Lisa Wellman (41st LD)

Chair of Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee

Lisa Wellman represents 41st Legislative District (Mercer Island, Bellevue, Newcastle and parts of Issaquah, Sammamish, and Renton) in the Washington State Senate. She was elected in 2016 after a 25-year career in technology and marketing including executive level positions in Fortune 100 companies.

A passionate advocate for education, Lisa began her career as a public school teacher but changed course in the 1980s becoming a systems analyst and programmer. She was recruited by Apple Computer to head up commercial publishing for the company's U.S. markets. Her success with Apple in the 90's led to her promotion as VP of Worldwide Publishing, Entertainment and New Media Markets.

In the Senate, Lisa serves as the chair of the [Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee](#). She was also chosen by her colleagues to serve on the [Energy, Environment & Technology Committee](#), and the [Labor & Commerce Committee](#).

She serves on the board of Thrive (focused on early childhood education), the Washington State Public Works Board, Partners for Rural Washington and is a mentor for MBA candidates at the Foster Business School at the University of Washington.

She earned a B.A., Summa Cum Laude, from Barat College of DePaul University and in her spare time enjoys photography, travel, reading and bridge. She has two daughters and a grandson and resides on Mercer Island.

Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos (37th LD)

Chair of House Education Committee

A community activist for more than 40 years, Sharon Tomiko Santos was elected to the Washington State House of Representatives in 1998. Rep. Santos chairs the House Education committee and serves on the House Capital Budget committee and Consumer Protection & Business committee.

She also serves appointments to the Washington State Education Opportunity Gap Accountability and Oversight committee, the Every Student Succeeds Act Consolidated Plan Team, and the Financial Education Public Private Partnership.

Her legislative proposals reflect her strong advocacy for providing quality early learning programs for young kids, ensuring a well-trained educator workforce, and closing the opportunity gap. Rep. Santos believes Washington state must strive for providing education excellence and opportunities for all students to learn.

Outside of education, her key policy interests include civil rights, women's rights, economic and environmental justice, affordable housing, and quality public education. She believes in providing level playing fields that allow those who work hard to succeed.

Rep. Santos has served on dozens of boards and foundations including the Boys and Girls Clubs of King County, National Asian Pacific American Women's Forum, and the University of Washington Business and Economic Development Program Board of Ambassadors.

She has received numerous awards for her legislative and community work including the Kip Tokuda Community Leadership Award from the Asian Pacific Islander Community Leadership Foundation and the Leadership and Vision Award from Junior Achievement of Washington.

A graduate of the Evergreen State College and of Northeastern University, Santos has worked in the banking industry, on staff to local public elected officials, and in senior management positions for non-profit organizations.

Representative Mike Steele (12th LD) Ranking Minority Member, House Education Committee

It's an honor to represent the great people of North Central Washington. In addition to my work at the Legislature, I've served as the executive director for the Lake Chelan Chamber of Commerce for more than 12 years. I also oversee the company finances and payroll for my family's 112-year-old orchard business.

My legislative priorities include creating a more friendly business climate in our region and throughout the state. Small businesses have a difficult time absorbing health insurance costs, dealing with burdensome regulations, and paying heavy B&O taxes. That needs to change. We must focus on public policy that allows businesses to thrive and job creators to prosper.

Despite our region's prosperity, buying a home and raising a family has become far too expensive. We must do more to make life affordable. That's why I'm committed to reducing tax burdens and supporting efforts to reduce the rising costs of buying, building, or renting a home.

Additionally, I am a strong supporter of greater educational and scholastic opportunities for all students in our state, along with increased access for those interested in career and technical training.