



Investing in the Promise of High-Quality Public Schools for Every Student

WEA 2023 Legislative Agenda

A high-quality public education that gives every Washingtonian the freedom to learn and achieve their dreams is not only possible, it's our state's paramount duty. WEA members are united for schools that are just, equitable, safe and have the resources they need to help students succeed. To close opportunity gaps the state must invest in our schools and in community supports that reduce poverty by stabilizing food and housing for students and their families.

Schools that meet student needs and grow their joy of learning

Students thrive when schools embrace and affirm their identities, meet their basic needs, and offer learning environments that spark their curiosity and creativity. We do this by providing:

- Free year-round nutritional and culturally appropriate school meals to ensure students have a solid foundation for learning and health.
- Music and arts programs as integral parts of education.
- Access to school libraries that are welcoming learning environments that engage students, build their passion for learning, and reflect the various identities and cultures of our diverse student community.
- Safe, holistic and empowering learning environments where multilingual students, immigrant students, and students of every, race, gender, sexual orientation, and faith feel a sense of belonging.
- Access to universal screeners, diagnostic assessments and supports to meet students' individual learning needs.
- State funding that supports equitable education opportunities for all students, including ample funding for Special Education and additional resources for schools that serve more students from low-income households, students in foster care, youth experiencing homelessness, and Multi-Lingual learners.
- Funding for additional Education Support Professionals to provide the personal attention and support students need as outlined in Initiative 1351.



Safe learning and working environments

Neither students nor educators should fear for their safety at school. Capital resources must be available to schools to make safety and health improvements in buildings.

Federally and state-wide we must ban assault weapons. In addition, the state must continue to stress responsible gun ownership and the importance of safe weapon storage.

The legislature began the process of addressing the growing mental health crisis among youth in the 2022 session. The state must continue to invest in these supports while making efforts to prioritize behavioral and mental health interventions over policing in schools.

Investments to attract and retain a diverse workforce

Persistent shortages across all job roles in education, from transportation to food service, coupled with high burnout and an insufficient traditional pipeline for educators have created widespread staffing crises. To improve recruitment and retention, the Legislature must:



- Provide competitive compensation increases for K-12 and higher education jobs.
- Reduce the overreliance on part-time faculty by converting more part-time jobs to full-time or tenured positions and increasing funding to narrow the gap between part-time and full-time faculty pay rates.
- Increase pay to provide a livable wage for classified K-12 and higher education staff.
- Invest in programs to recruit and retain a diverse education workforce that better reflects our students, including paid teacher residencies, grow-your-own programs, college grants or loan forgiveness, and mentorship programs.
- Ensure that retiree pensions and health care subsidies keep pace with inflation.

The Washington Education Association is more than 90,000 education support professionals, teachers, education staff associates, faculty, and school office professionals in K-12 and higher education throughout Washington state.

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