



## **Town Hall Talking Points and Questions March 2023**

### **Special Education**

The Washington legislature only funds Special Education services for up to 13.5% of a district's students. More than half the districts in the state are at or above this arbitrary cap, meaning students with disabilities in these districts need Special Education supports the state does not fund. As a result, districts must cut funding from other programs in order to provide services the state should be funding.

What are you doing to increase funding for Special Education and ensure the state funds the supports students in the state are entitled to receive?

### **ESP/Classified Staff Pay**

Education Support Professionals – often referred to Classified Staff – are crucial to the operations of our schools. These positions include paraeducators, school office staff, bus drivers, lunchroom staff, IT staff, custodians and many other positions that make student learning possible. The state has consistently failed to provide these staff with competitive salaries that respect their skills and importance. Moreover, this failure impacts students because districts struggle to hire many of these positions due to the underfunded wages. Unfilled paraeducator positions make it hard to provide desperately needed services to students in both general and Special Education. Similarly, a shortage of drivers is leaving parents scrambling to find transportation or forcing students onto extended bus rides.

How will you work to raise salaries for these positions to ensure that the state is providing respectful pay for hard work and that districts can fill these needed positions to meet student needs?

### **Pay for Adjunct Faculty**

About 70 percent of faculty are part-time, contingent, or adjunct. The state has failed to provide fair pay, job security, and very often healthcare. These poor working conditions are bad for the educators personally and professionally and drive high turnover and difficulty hiring that hurts student learning.

What commitment will you make to address both the pay inequity and the overreliance on these faculty in our Community and Technical Colleges?