

A Resolution in Support of the Equitable Representation of Small and/or Rural Locals within the Washington Education Association

Be it resolved that We, the Board of Directors of the Washington Education Association, by this resolution, reaffirm the commitment of our State Association and its Councils to address the needs and concerns of our Small and/or Rural Local Associations, Districts, Schools and the Communities they serve across our state.

Whereas, Small and/or Rural Locals are currently defined within our Association as any Local in a School District or Educational Service District with 150 or less bargaining unit members; and

Whereas, currently 256 out of the 373 Locals in our state, (69% of our total Locals,) meet this definition as a Small and/or Rural Local within our Association; and

Whereas, often our Small and/or Local leadership and membership feel like their voice often goes unheard at the Council and State levels within our Association, thus creating a feeling of disconnection between our Councils and the State Association; and

Whereas, our Small and/or Rural Locals are currently some of the lowest paid membership bases in our state, and as a result, disproportionately pay a larger share of their yearly income to our Council, State and National Association dues than those from most larger and/or more affluent, and higher paid Locals; and

Whereas, the McCleary et al. v State of Washington lawsuit was first filed by the parents a Small and Rural District to “fix” the equitable funding model of public schools (as defined in Article IX of the Constitution of the State of Washington,) yet Small and/or Rural Locals are currently seeing an even wider disparity in educator compensation, and the ability to attract and retain prospective teachers to our Locals than those from larger and/or more affluent, and higher paid Locals; and

Whereas, the voice of our Small and/or Rural Locals, are not always included on all of the Committees and Work Groups created at the Council and State level; and

Whereas, in our Continuing Resolutions, Section C, #12 - “Small Schools Funding” (CR C-12,) it states that, “The Washington Education Association believes that all students, wherever they reside, should have equal educational opportunities. The Association also believes that areas of low population density need additional financial aid in order to offer the variety of desirable programs available in populous areas. The Association further believes the Legislature needs to provide small schools with sufficient funds to give their students the same opportunities for an adequate education as students in large districts,” yet we as an organization seem to continually tackle advocating for the needs of Large and/or Urban Schools issues first, with Small and/or Rural specific issues addressed only as an afterthought; and

Whereas, even the RCW’s of our state recognize our Small and/or Rural Schools as “Second Class” Schools.

Therefore, Be it resolved, that we, the members of the Board of Directors of the Washington Education Association, agree to advocate that:

The Washington Education Association and its Councils shall resolve to adopt policies of equitable representation on any State or Council committees whose work potentially intersects with issues that directly affect our Small and/or Rural Locals across the state; and

The Washington Education Association and its Councils shall resolve to seek input from Small and/or Rural Leaders and Locals when crafting any State or Council Legislative Agenda to address issues that will affect our Locals, Districts and/or Communities; and

The Washington Education Association and its Councils shall resolve to advocate for the funding and support that Small and/or Rural Districts need to offer the same access to a quality, well-rounded curriculum that students from a larger and/or more affluent Large and/or Urban District would receive, and that should be the basic right of every Student in our state; and

The Washington Education Association and its Councils shall resolve to advocate for the funding and/or resources to help our Small and/or Rural Locals to both attract and retain the same level of quality educators to educate our Students as our larger and/or more affluent Large and/or Urban Districts; and

The Washington Education Association and its Councils shall resolve to advocate for every Student, in every District of our state, regardless of size, geographic location, or zip code, to have full access to a standard curriculum model that allows them full access well-rounded curriculum, which includes the Arts, Career and Technical Education, access to Mental Health and Social-Emotional Services and Instruction, as well as a functioning Library and Media Arts space in every School across our State.

The Washington Education Association
Small & Rural Committee

Approved by Vote of the Body this Day, March 9, 2024.