



# Investing in Washington's Future

## 2025 Legislative Agenda

Washingtonians are united in our support for fully funded, high-quality public education that helps students build a bright future. The legislature must fully fund K-12 and public college education systems for Washington's children and youth and support policies to ensure inclusive, safe public education.

### **ADDRESS THE GROWING STUDENT BEHAVIORAL HEALTH CRISIS WITH THE NEEDED SUPPORTS & RESOURCES**

Educators need additional systemic resources to support students in meeting behavioral expectations and to address their unmet needs. This includes additional training, more supports, and updated policies that ensure safe, uninterrupted learning environments. The legislature must fund professional development and revise educator preparation standards to ensure educators are ready for today's classrooms.

### **INCREASE WAGES FOR EDUCATION SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS (ESPs) & ADJUNCT FACULTY**

Paraeducators, bus drivers, food service, school office professionals, and other classified staff support students and are critical to keeping schools running. Low pay resulting from a lack of state funding creates chronic shortages and constant turnover in these roles. The legislature must increase compensation for these staff.

In colleges, adjunct faculty wages are far below full-time faculty wages, creating an incentive for colleges to use more contingent positions. Over-reliance on adjuncts who are often not compensated for office hours reduces student access to learning. The legislature must ensure equitable compensation for adjunct faculty.

### **FULLY FUND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Students with disabilities have the right to basic education and to the services provided by their Individual Education Plans (IEPs). The legislature must build upon the progress made in the 2023-25 biennium and fully fund special education. In addition, the state must continue its commitment to supporting inclusionary practices professional development so that educators have the skills to work with all learners in our classrooms.



### **ADEQUATELY FUND SCHOOLS**

Current funding falls woefully short of keeping our schools running. The legislature must update the prototypical funding formula to provide ample, equitable funding for K-12 education; to expand funding for CTE, Open Doors, and Institutional Education; and to provide equitable access to key staff, such as teacher-librarians.

To accomplish this, the legislature must advance additional progressive revenue sources.

## **ENSURE EVERY DISTRICT CAN RECRUIT & RETAIN EDUCATORS**

To ensure a strong future teaching workforce, our state must support and invest in high-quality apprenticeships in teacher residency for high-demand certifications like Special Education. Apprenticeships provide educators who are already working in schools an alternative route to a teaching certificate.

The legislature must improve the teacher recruitment pipeline by paying for student teaching work. It must reward dedicated teachers with an experience mix that reflects districts' workforces. Additionally, the legislature must retain more educators by allowing us to remove unused endorsements from our certificates.

Regionalization funding factors have created border impacts and harmed some districts' ability to recruit and retain staff. The legislature must find ways to improve the regionalization system, such as using the Metropolitan Statistical Areas as the basis for regionalization as recommended by the Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee.



## **FULLFILL THE PROMISE OF A DIGNIFIED RETIREMENT**

Our state promised educators a stable, dignified retirement and it's time to fulfill that promise. That includes equitable pension opportunities for educators who never had a choice in selecting our plan, fair accumulation of pension-related years of service for part-time employees, and an annual COLA for all retirees.



## **AFFIRM EVERY STUDENT'S RIGHT TO AN INCLUSIVE, ENGAGING EDUCATION**

Schools must be safe, inclusive, and engaging environments where all students are protected and empowered. The legislature must affirm the rights of students who seek gender-affirming school experiences and ensure protections for educators who provide for safe and inclusive learning environments. Additionally, both middle and high schools must offer age-appropriate health education.

### **WEA GOVERNMENT RELATIONS**

**Djibril Diop, Director**

[ddiop@washingtonea.org](mailto:ddiop@washingtonea.org)

**Julie Salvi**

[jsalvi@washingtonea.org](mailto:jsalvi@washingtonea.org)

**Simone Boe**

[sboe@washingtonea.org](mailto:sboe@washingtonea.org)

**Jared Mason-Gere**

[jmasongere@washingtonea.org](mailto:jmasongere@washingtonea.org)

**Nasue Nishida**

[nnishida@washingtonea.org](mailto:nnishida@washingtonea.org)

### **WEA EDUCATOR CAREER PATHWAYS**

**Jim Meadows, Dean**

[jmeadows@washingtonea.org](mailto:jmeadows@washingtonea.org)

**Lorrell Noahr**

[lnoahr@washingtonea.org](mailto:lnoahr@washingtonea.org)