

Education

The backbone of our democracy is a free, universal public-school system (pre-K through post-secondary), designed to develop informed, reasoning, and thoughtful persons who are critical thinking lifelong learners prepared to participate in our civic society. The growing demands of globalization, technology, and cross-cultural understanding require a well-funded public education system that offers the challenges and opportunities to develop the full potential of all students for a skilled workforce, regardless of their background, economic status, experience, ability, or age. We recognize the direct connection between individual educational attainment and the long-term economic sustainability of our society.

We believe:

We Call For:

National Level	State Level

- The Washington State Legislature to fulfill its constitutional duty to “make ample provisions for the education of all children” as reaffirmed by the Washington State Supreme Court in the McCleary decision;
- Free access and full funding of public education, including all basic, gifted, vocational, technical, alternative, special education, English Language Learners, and other state/federal programs and mandates;
- Addressing the opportunity gap through school choice such as Tribal Compact Schools
- Funding for smaller class sizes based on effective class size studies;
- Full funding of Head Start and Early Childhood Education and Assistance Programs;
- Schools to be free from weapons, violence, bullying, harassment, retribution (by staff and students), drugs and alcohol;
- All school personnel to be trained in de-escalation techniques;
- Full inclusion of all students into the school environment, regardless of age, race, ethnic origin, national origin, language, religion, sex, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, marital status, parenthood, disability, physical size, economic status, or political affiliation;
- The freedom for students to use school locker rooms and bathrooms that correspond to their gender identities;
- School boundaries to be drawn in such a way that racial and economic segregation of students is minimized;
- Particular regard for the educational and human services needs of the student who is or has been sexually active, or is pregnant;
- Particular regard for the educational and human services needs of specific populations, including students who are in foster care, homeless, migrants, or undocumented;

- School academic and behavioral health counselors, librarians, and nurses sufficient to serve the needs of every student;
- The availability of high quality continuing education and career training, including school-to-work partnerships and apprenticeship programs, in addition to traditional higher education for adult workers;
- The inclusion of social-emotional learning, music, fine arts, environmental education, foreign language instruction, civics and physical education in the Washington Basic Education Act, beginning in Kindergarten;
- A curriculum that is rigorous, comprehensive, and historically and scientifically accurate at all levels and that recognizes the cultural perspectives of children from diverse and indigenous communities;
- Medically accurate and comprehensive sex education in schools, including education on healthy relationships and models of consent;
- Providing age appropriate instruction on how to prevent, identify, and report suspected child abuse;
- Instructional freedom that is student-centered within the curriculum;
- Programs to teach awareness on ways to reduce individual and local environmental impacts;
- Funding school construction to accommodate increased growth, lower class sizes, full-day kindergarten and maintenance including replacement of all portables for the health and safety of our children;
- Full funding for school transportation;
- Purchase of equipment and technology in compliance with the Americans With Disabilities Act;
- Free education to extend through public college or university and vocational/technical schools;
- All high school graduates in the United States to have access to public higher education regardless of means;
- Congress to reform policies that deny federal tuition aid to college students convicted of drug possession;
- Adopting a non-profit GED as an alternative to the for-profit Pearson GED;
- Legislation that significantly lowers the interest rate on student loans and finds ways to relieve the financial stress of college students and retroactively for graduate students burdened with huge student debt;
- Simple majority elections for school bonds and protection of the simple majority for school levies;
- Encouraging high school community-based service;
- Encouraging that high schools offer courses in personal finance and civics;
- Expanding and supporting STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Arts and Mathematics) education through diverse learning opportunities in grades K-12 as a matter of national security and global economic competitiveness;
- Expanding vocational education and apprenticeship programs in middle school, high school and beyond;
- Local and state control of policies concerning public education while complying with federal oversight and receiving federal funding to preserve quality, fairness and civil rights for all;
- Public education employees' rights to organize, engage in collective bargaining, and strike without fear of reprisal or replacement;
- Education funding equity regardless of district tax base, with a new funding formula for public schools and capital projects;
- Salary and benefits for adjunct and part-time college instructors to be based on compensation levels for full-time professional staff, according to percentage of full-time equivalency;
- Certificated and classified employees' compensation equal to those of other professionals of similar experience and education to attract/retain quality public-school employees;
- Partial student loan forgiveness and loan consolidation at the federal level;

- Congress to reform policies that deny federal tuition aid to college students convicted of drug possession;
- Work/study programs and programs offering higher education in exchange for public service to be expanded, and Pell grants to be increased and adjusted for inflation until such time as a fully tuition-free public college system is established;
- Full funding and implementation of the Washington State Board of Health's revised rules for health and safety of school environments;
- School food programs that ensure school breakfasts and lunches meet or exceed state nutritional standards and support healthy habits and classroom learning so that students receive an equal opportunity to succeed;
- High-quality before- and after-school programs, and learning opportunities to address summer learning loss;
- School discipline that is results-oriented;
- Before and after school care and preschool/early childhood education programs to ensure all students receive an equal opportunity to succeed;
- Support and mandated use of open educational resources (textbooks) in higher education;
- Full funding of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act;
- Math instruction that includes arithmetic and geometric fluency, proof techniques and logic, and elementary statistics, and how to apply those tools to real-world scenarios to promote general numeracy;
- Critical thinking instruction to promote recognition of cognitive biases and logical fallacies;
- Uncoupling school bonds from the state non-education capital budget and passing them with a simple majority;
- Gun-free zones in all schools;
- Repeal of the Washington State charter school law and increased funding for innovative public education such as magnet schools.

We Oppose:

- Charter schools, and if we must have them, we oppose:
 - a. Any attempt to "fix" the charter school initiative;
 - b. Lack of public oversight and transparency of tax money expenditures including their private for-profit contractors;
 - c. Lack of labor protection for teachers and staff, who are not unionized or certified;
 - d. The "trigger" school mechanism in the charter law that allows the takeover of any school building upon the presentation of a petition by the majority of teachers or parents;
 - e. Excessive pay for charter school administrators in relation to public school administrators;
- School vouchers;
- The commercialization of school environments including food sales;
- Linking military recruitment to educational funding;
- Organized prayer in public schools;
- National standardized performance testing;
- Basing teacher pay in whole or in part on student test scores;
- All so-called "reforms" that are not based upon sound and objective information; that are disguised attempts to blame teachers for the problems in public education to weaken teacher unions; or to privatize our public education system for profit;
- The escalation of tuition at institutions of higher education;

- The use of textbooks in public education that whitewash history, omit/deny scientifically verifiable facts of widely accepted theories, and propose religiously based answers to scientific questions;
- The reduction or elimination of recess as a regular part of elementary school education;
- Suppression of unpopular research and research results, and curtailment of academic freedom;
- The gathering of personal student information for commercial gain;
- Predatory student loans that cannot be refinanced or discharged in bankruptcy.