

# Washington State PTA 2018 Legislative Platform

## Top 5 Legislative Priorities

<b>Social Emotional Learning</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prioritize school climate through strong social and emotional learning supports to maximize learning opportunities that help Washington students succeed in school and life.</li> <li>• Integrate social emotional learning and trauma informed practices in the education system, teacher and principal preparation programs and professional learning.</li> <li>• Ensure adequate staffing of psychologists, counselors, social workers, behavioral specialists, and nurses in schools.</li> </ul>
<b>Amplify Fund Basic Education</b>	<p>It is time to keep the promise made to the children of Washington state in the McCleary decision by fulfilling Washington state's paramount duty to amply fund basic education.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Funding solutions must be progressive revenue sources that are sufficient, sustainable, and equitable.</li> <li>• Solutions must not cut services that support the whole child, or rely only on redistributing existing education funds.</li> </ul>
<b>Closing the Opportunity Gap</b>	<p>Provide teacher training and student supports that include effective solutions to close the educational opportunity gap by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Completing the implementation of the recommendations of the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC), and</li> <li>• Implementing the 2016 HB 1541 to close the educational opportunity gap.</li> </ul>
<b>Standards for Para-educators</b>	<p>Provide a quality education for all students receiving instruction from para-educators by establishing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Statewide standards, training, and career development for para-educators,</li> <li>• Minimum employment standards, certification, and endorsements,</li> <li>• Training for teachers who have para-educators assisting in their classrooms, and their principals.</li> </ul>
<b>Breakfast After the Bell</b>	<p>Washington State currently ranks 45<sup>th</sup> for utilization of the federal school breakfast program and currently, only 1/3 of eligible children have access to this program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Support legislation instituting and funding a Breakfast After the Bell Program in high-needs schools.</li> <li>• Initiate policies that encourage early adoption of Breakfast After the Bell Programs at the district level.</li> </ul>

For more information, contact WSPTA Legislative Director Nancy Chamberlain at [ptalegdir@wastatepta.org](mailto:ptalegdir@wastatepta.org).

For a full description of the platform and Top 5 issues, please visit: <http://wastatepta.org/advocacy>.

## Also Supported (listed alphabetically):

### Addressing the Teacher Shortage

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that improve the teacher pipeline, to recruit and retain effective educators, especially in high-demand, hard to fill positions, in remote locations, or high-poverty schools through

- funding of recruitment and conditional scholarship programs, particularly for teachers of color who reflect the communities in which they work;
- expansion of alternative routes to certification that have been approved by the PESB;
- expanding reciprocity;
- phased-in expansion of BEST grants to all schools

### Best Practices for School Meal Policies

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that

- use CDC and USDA recommendations to clearly define a minimum lunch period for students as a minimum of 20 minutes of *seated* time;
- promote Recess Before Lunch;
- prohibit meal debt policies that shame or punish students;
- promote policies that increase access to school breakfast.

### Career Connected Learning, CTE & Stem

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that support Career Connected Learning K-12 programs that inspire, provide training, CTE, and weave real-life career options in STEM, manufacturing, etc. into K-12 classrooms. The new 2017-19 budget expanded CTE and we need to build on that to implement new programs at the state and local levels.

### Dual Credit Equality & Support

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that

- establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting as many undergraduate credits as possible to students who have received a passing grade on any dual credit course exam;
- support adequate funding & the expansion of these programs to cover family outreach, supplies, staff, and staff training; and
- support adequate funding for credit exams so that all students have equitable access to exams upon completion of a course.

### Engaging Families in Student Success

Increase school and family partnerships that result in increased family participation by:

- Adopting a clear definition and title for Family Engagement Coordinators
- Expanding funding to at least 1.0 FTE Family Engagement Coordinator per school, starting with high-poverty schools first.
  - o Start: 2017-18 school year;
  - o Completion: 2020-21 school year.

### Equity for Highly Capable

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that achieve equitable and full identification within all demographic groups for participation in Washington state public school Highly Capable (HiCap) programs, especially for: low-income students, students with learning and other disabilities, English Language Learners,

and students of color; by using evidence-based best practices for identification.

### Improving Educational Outcomes for Foster Children

Currently less than 50% of foster youth graduate from high school and less than 4% go to college. We support efforts to increase high school and college graduation rates through the creation and support of services which will facilitate smooth transitions between schools for foster youth at risk of not receiving credit for work completed.

### Post-Secondary/Higher Education Access and Affordability

Washington state has the leading economy in the nation and a skills gap that can only be closed by increasing access to and affordability of Post-Secondary education, including associate & bachelor degrees, and career & technical degrees/certificates with affordable tuition and local access to all programs while still supporting "State Need Grants" and "College Bound" scholarship programs.

### Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Gender-based Violence

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that

- present awareness and prevention programs that address sexual harassment and violence and engage students in mandated respect and consent curriculum;
- provide support services for victims of sexual harassment and violence;
- include training on the responsibilities of educational institutions, and the rights of victims, under Title IX.
- include the need for enthusiastic consent as an integral part of middle and high school sex education curriculum.

### Removing Barriers to Implementing ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program)

High quality early learning is a smart investment that helps children succeed in school and life. Washington State PTA supports policies to ensure access to high quality early learning by expanding ECEAP, the state pre-K program, including:

- Expanding capacity by eliminating systemic barriers
- Supporting quality early learning through multiple means.

### Restorative Justice and School Safety

Enhance school safety by incorporating restorative justice models in discipline processes while supporting family and community-based alternatives to achieve youth accountability. Reduce racial and ethnic disparities by leveraging local school districts and juvenile justice systems to institute equitable policies on discipline, safety, and justice.

### School Construction and Class Size Reduction

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that provides stable and timely financing for school construction, modernization, and safety needs; updates the square footage allocation formula, which recognizes modern educational needs and actual cost; replaces the 60 percent super-majority with a simple majority requirement for passage of school bonds; and extends the K-3 grant program.



***WSPTA believes that by bolstering the crucial role of social emotional learning and trauma informed practices in education, we could help students do better in school, and lead more successful and fulfilling lives. Currently, far too many students in Washington state are failing to meet their potential to succeed in school and in life. Without strong social and emotional supports, students are at risk of bullying, maladjustment, trauma, depression, interpersonal violence, suicide, substance abuse, truancy, and dropout.***

### Background

- An average of two youth between the ages of 10 and 24 die by suicide each week in Washington state. 40% of youth who attempt suicide, make a first attempt in elementary or middle school.<sup>1</sup>
- 2016 Washington State Healthy Youth Survey results<sup>2</sup>:
  - ◇ 28-37% of youth (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades) felt so sad and hopeless for two or more weeks in a row that they stopped their usual activities.
  - ◇ 17-27% (6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades) had been bullied in the past 30 days.
  - ◇ 8-21% (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades) attempted, considered attempting, or made a plan for suicide.
  - ◇ 10-17% (6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades) report not feeling safe at school.
  - ◇ 22-33% (8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup> grades) report being anxious, nervous or on edge in the past two weeks.
- Trauma is common in children's lives and is the second-highest predictor of academic failure.<sup>3</sup>

### Why is it helpful to teach social emotional learning, and using trauma informed practices in schools?

- Reduces barriers to learning such as stress and anxiety<sup>4</sup>
- Supports a positive school climate, which allows students to feel safe, be engaged and be respected.<sup>4</sup>
- Social emotional learning supports academics<sup>4</sup>:
  - ◇ 11% improvement in achievement test scores
  - ◇ 9% decrease in conduct problems, such as classroom misbehavior and aggression
  - ◇ 10% decrease in emotional distress, such as anxiety and depression
  - ◇ 9% improvement in attitudes about self, others, and school
  - ◇ 9% improvement in classroom behavior

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that:

1. Integrate social emotional learning and trauma informed practices in the education system, teacher and principal preparation programs and professional learning.
2. Ensure adequate staffing of psychologists, counselors, social workers, behavioral specialists and nurses in schools.
3. Prioritize school climate.

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2. Washington State Healthy Youth Survey 2016. <http://www.askhys.net/Docs/HYS%202016%20Analytic%20Report%20Final%2010-24-17.pdf>
3. <https://acestoohigh.com/2012/02/28/spokane-wa-students-child-trauma-prompts-search-for-prevention/>
4. Durlak, Joseph A., Weissberg, Roger P., Dymnicki, Allison B., Taylor, Rebecca D., and Schellinger, Kriston B. (2011). The Impact of Enhancing Students' Social Emotional Learning: A Meta-Analysis of School-Based Universal Interventions. *Child Development* 82(1): 405-432.  
Retrieved from <http://www.casel.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/meta-analysis-child-development-1.pdf>

**\*For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website ([www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org))**



***It is time to keep the promise made to the children of Washington state in the McCleary decision by fulfilling Washington state's paramount duty to amplify fund basic education. Funding solutions must be progressive revenue sources that are sufficient, sustainable and equitable, and must not cut services that support the whole child, or rely only on redistributing existing education funds.***

### Background

In its November 15, 2017 order, the Washington Supreme Court declared that the state had satisfied the court's mandate to provide basic education funding for the operational costs of the transportation formula, MSOC (materials, supplies and operating costs), all-day kindergarten, smaller K-3 class sizes, and student categorical programs.<sup>1</sup> The court also said that it wasn't necessary to fund actual costs<sup>2</sup>, and that experience would be the judge of whether the funding proves adequate.<sup>1</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

WSPTA thanks the court for continuing to retain jurisdiction, and is advocating for four areas of specific relief during the 2018 legislative session:

- 1. Increase funding to close the gap between state funding for special education and actual district costs.** While the 2017 legislature lifted the cap on the percentage of student population that will be funded by the state<sup>3</sup>, under federal law, school districts must serve every student who enrolls in their schools. Funding gaps continue to exist and there are new limits on local levy use. Parents expect their students with special needs to receive necessary services to support their student's capabilities and achieve outcomes of academic success and civic engagement.<sup>4</sup>
- 2. Fund capital costs to ensure construction of classrooms to meet state policies of all-day kindergarten and smaller K-3 class sizes.** It was a state policy mandate to provide all-day kindergarten<sup>5</sup>. EHB 2242 also requires districts to meet the 17:1 class size ratios by the 2018-19 school year to receive the "operational funding" for K-3 class size reduction.<sup>5</sup> 2ESSB 6080(2015)<sup>6</sup> envisioned three biennia of grant funding to eligible school districts to pay for the smaller class size and all-day kindergarten policy change, which created the need for additional classrooms. The 2015-17 capital budget included \$234 million, but the 2017-19 capital budget does not include a second round of grant funding, leaving more than 70 districts with an anticipated \$230 million in additional costs to meet the ratio of 17:1. This will harm students who will remain in crowded classrooms and who will not receive the additional operational funding.<sup>7</sup>
- 3. Address the inequitable levy limits.** EHB 2242 both placed constraints on how local levy money can be spent and capped local levies at the lesser of \$1.50/\$1000 assessed value or \$2500/student (or Local Effort Assistance at \$1500/student).<sup>3</sup> These arbitrary caps have led to huge inequities in the abilities of school districts to support enrichment activities.<sup>8</sup>
- 4. Create a comprehensive "hold harmless" in the wake of EHB 2242, whereby no school district would receive less funding through state or local revenues.** The legislature created a "hold harmless" for teacher salaries, but there is no hold harmless backed up by real dollars in the biennial budget for all funding changes<sup>3</sup>. Many school districts are projecting significant gaps between what they formerly received from local levies and what the state has provided under EHB 2242. Funding for our students and schools should not be going backward.<sup>9</sup>

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### Citations

1. Washington Supreme Court Order No. 84362-7, p. 37.
2. Washington Supreme Court Order No. 84362-7, p. 28.
3. HB 2242 (2017). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2242&Year=2017>
4. See also:
  - \*WSPTA Resolution 18.22 Children with Special Needs;
  - \*WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support the passage of state budget bills containing adequate levels of funding for child-related programs”;
  - \*WSPTA Legislative Principle on Public Education Policies – “Ensuring the provision of high quality special education services and accommodations to improve outcomes for all students with disabilities and special needs.”
5. ESHB 2261 (2009). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=2261&Year=2009>
6. SB 6080 (2015). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=6080&Year=2015>
7. See also:
  - \*WSPTA Resolution 18:11 Common School Construction Funding;
  - \*WSPTA Resolution 18.18 Reduction in Class Size;
  - \*WSPTA Legislative Principle on Public Education Policies – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy that will strengthen public education for our state’s children and youth. The association shall support: K-12 class sizes aligned with best practice research findings”
8. See also:
  - \*WSPTA Resolution 18.26 Levies and Local Effort Assistance;
  - \*WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support equitable levy and local effort assistance (LEA) funding per student.”
9. See also:
  - \*WSPTA Resolution 18.28 Increasing Revenue to Support Our Legislative Principles;
  - \*WSPTA Legislative Principle on Budget, Revenue and Funding – “The WSPTA shall identify and initiate education and action on public policy affecting tax policies that are fair, equitable, and provide stable, adequate revenues for public education and for programs that benefit children and youth. The association shall: Support the passage of state budget bills containing adequate levels of funding for child-related programs; and Oppose budget policies, deficit reduction efforts, and other legislative proposals that negatively impact funding for child-related programs”

***\*For more information on the WSPTA advocacy program, please visit our website ([www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org))***





***WSPTA's vision is that every child's potential become a reality, but we acknowledge that students of color, with socioeconomic disadvantages, or with disabilities have faced systemic inequities, institutionalized racism, and disparate educational opportunities<sup>1</sup>. Left unaddressed, this opportunity gap has led to unacceptable gaps in outcomes for these students.***

### Background

- In Washington state, the persistent, systemic opportunity gap has manifested as growing outcome gaps in state<sup>2</sup> and national assessments<sup>3</sup>, and disproportionalities in the rates of 9<sup>th</sup> grade course failure<sup>4</sup>, enrollment in rigorous high school courses<sup>5,6</sup>, high school graduation<sup>7</sup>, college enrollment<sup>8</sup>, and college course remediation<sup>9</sup>.
- Closing these opportunity gaps and lowering barriers to achievement would result in substantial economic gains, generating benefits that are three times their costs<sup>10</sup>:
  - ◊ The share of working-age men of color who have a bachelor's degree would double;
  - ◊ Men of color would earn as much as \$170 billion more annually;
  - ◊ Average weekly earnings among U.S. workers overall would increase by 3.6 percent;
  - ◊ Total gross domestic product (GDP) would increase by 1.8 percent.
- The Washington state legislature acknowledged the Educational Opportunity Gap during the 2008 redefinition of basic education, and authorized a workgroup, the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) to collect data and make recommendations for closing the opportunity gap<sup>11</sup>. These recommendations were passed into law (4SHB 1541) in 2016<sup>12</sup>.

### Proposed Solutions

Provide teacher training and student supports that include effective solutions to close the educational opportunity gap by:

- Completing the implementation of the recommendations of the EOGOAC<sup>1</sup>, and
- Implementing the provisions of 4SHB 1541 to close the educational opportunity gap:
  - ◊ Reduce the length of time students of color are excluded from school due to suspension and expulsion and provide students support for reengagement plans;
  - ◊ Enhance the cultural competence of current and future educators and classified staff;
  - ◊ Endorse all educators in English language learner and second language acquisition;
  - ◊ Account for the transitional bilingual instruction program instructional services provided to English language learner students\*;
  - ◊ Analyze the opportunity gap deeper disaggregation of student demographic data\*;
  - ◊ Invest in the recruitment, hiring, and retention of educators of color;
  - ◊ Incorporate integrated student services and family engagement\*; and
  - ◊ Strengthen student transitions at each stage of the education development pathway: Early learning to elementary, elementary to secondary, secondary to college and career.

*\*designates implementation subject to funding*

Several of WSPTA's other 2018 Legislative Priorities, including Social Emotional Learning, Ample Fund Basic Education, Addressing the Teacher Shortage, Engaging Families in Student Success, and Restorative Justice and School Safety are foundational to closing educational opportunity gaps in Washington state.

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4. 9<sup>th</sup> Grade Failure Rate Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/9thGrade.aspx>
5. High School Dual Credit Course Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/DualCredit.aspx>
6. Advanced Placement Trend Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/AdvancedPlacement/pubdocs/2012-2016APTrendData.pdf>
7. High School Graduation Rate Gap Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/GraduationRates.aspx>
8. College Enrollment Trend Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/PostsecondaryEnrollment.aspx>
9. College Course Remediation Rate Data. <http://www.k12.wa.us/DataAdmin/PerformanceIndicators/PostsecondaryRemediation.aspx>
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11. Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee. <http://www.k12.wa.us/Workgroups/EOGOAC.aspx>
12. 4SHB 1541 (2016). <http://lawfilesexternal.wa.gov/biennium/2015-16/Pdf/Bills/Session%20Laws/House/1541-S4.SL.pdf>

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***WSPTA acknowledges that the education of children in our schools is depends upon the excellence of the educators working with those children. Paraeducators are classified staff who perform many functions in schools, including instructional assistance and tutoring under the supervision of a teacher. In 2017, the Legislature passed [ESHB 1115](#), that provides new rules and better support for school districts to train paraeducators, and provides a simpler career path for paraeducators to become certified teachers.<sup>1</sup> In 2018, the Legislature must continue to invest in these staff who work with the most vulnerable students, and whose work is critical to closing the opportunity gap.***

### Background

- **Working with highest need students** - In Washington state, paraeducators provide the majority of instruction (62%) to students with disabilities, students learning English, and students from low-income families. There are approximately 27,000 paraeducators working in Washington's public schools (pre-K and K-12).<sup>2</sup>
- **Five years in the making** - In 2017, after a five-year lobbying effort that included a year-long study by a state-commissioned panel, multiple hearings, and a statewide grassroots advocacy effort (all supported by WSPTA), the legislature passed [ESHB 1115](#). The bill provides new rules and better support for school districts to train paraeducators, and provides a simpler career path for paraeducators to become a certified teacher.<sup>1</sup>
- **What does the law do?** - A new state board will oversee and support community college programs to help paraeducators transition a two-year technical degree to a four-year teaching degree that includes certification. Grant programs will support districts that develop their own certification programs, and specific training programs.
- **First-in-the-nation** - Washington state paraeducators have been recognized by the state as an important member of the instructional team. No other state in the country has taken the step Washington state took in the 2017 session to provide a comprehensive professional development program for our paraeducators. The voice of the Washington State PTA played a critical role in the passage of [ESHB 1115](#).

### Next Steps for 2018 Legislative Session

WSPTA advocates to keep the momentum going by urging that the Legislature continues to pay attention and build the foundation for lasting changes. In the upcoming legislative session, PSE-Classified 1948 (the paraeducator union that was the driving force behind the new law) will advocate for **\$1,600,000** in the 2018 Supplemental Budget<sup>3</sup>:

- **\$100,000** - In the 2016 legislative session, the Legislature provided \$1 million to build online training modules for paraeducators. These training modules have been provided to the paraeducator board for final refinement and approval. Based upon their review, it appears small changes may be needed on some of these modules. Current estimates are that the Legislature should provide \$100,000 to update these modules to meet the needs identified by the board.
- **\$1,500,000** - Training modules are needed for paraeducators who work in specialized programs like special education and the transitional bilingual instruction program. The Legislature should provide \$1.5 million to build online training modules for special education (\$500,000) and the transitional bilingual instruction program (\$1,000,000) paraeducators.

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2. Morton, Neal. With Principals in "Crisis Mode," New Washington State Law Taps into Thousands of Potential Teacher Recruits. Seattle Times, August 20, 2017. <https://www.seattletimes.com/education/lab/with-principals-in-crisis-mode-new-state-law-taps-into-thousands-of-potential-teacher-recruits/>
3. Doug Nelson, Gov. Relations Director for PSE/SEIU Classified 1948, *Personal communication*.

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# Breakfast After The Bell

## 2018 WSPTA Legislative Priority

***WSPTA acknowledges that school breakfast is associated with a variety of positive outcomes, such as improved health, increased school attendance, reduced behavioral problems, and increased academic achievement. Unfortunately, a majority of Washington students who qualify for free or reduced-price breakfasts do not currently receive one at school, with many students eating no breakfast at all.***<sup>1, 2</sup>

### Background

Food insecurity is an issue for one in four students in Washington State. However, **for students with access to free and reduced lunch, there is only a 33% utilization rate for breakfast**, well short of the Food Research and Action Center goal of 70%. In fact, only 10% of school districts in Washington State have reached that goal.<sup>1,3</sup>

Issues surrounding food insecurity sneak into many aspects of students' school success. In schools that are meeting national breakfast participation goals (70%) there are fewer suspensions and expulsions (17.7%), fewer missed school days (40%) and an increase in student test scores.<sup>1</sup>

**Washington state ranks 45<sup>th</sup> in the nation for utilization of school breakfast.** Implementing Breakfast After the Bell programs in Washington's 400 high needs schools would help reduce barriers to school breakfast such as bus schedules and stigma by making it a seamless part of the school day, just like lunch. **Breakfast After the Bell is estimated to result in 25,000 more free and reduced-price eligible students participating in breakfast each day, totaling 5.25 million additional breakfasts served each year.**<sup>1,4,5</sup>

WSPTA has been a supporter of this legislation since it was introduced to the legislature in the 2013 session (HB 1295). **In the 2017 Legislative Session, ESHB 1508<sup>6</sup> passed the House 90-8;** a companion bill, SB 5696<sup>7</sup> stalled.

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that:

- **Institute and fund a Breakfast After the Bell Program in high needs schools**, provide adequate time for students to consume the offered food<sup>6</sup>, and provide that student participation in breakfast after the beginning of the school day must be considered instructional hours if students are provided the opportunity to engage in educational activity.<sup>7</sup>
- **Encourage early adoption of Breakfast After the Bell Programs at the district level.**

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6. House Bill 1508 (2017-18). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=1508&Year=2017>
7. Senate Bill 5696 (2017-18). <http://app.leg.wa.gov/billssummary?BillNumber=5696&Year=2017>

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***WSPTA recognizes that preparing students for career, college, and life are dependent on an excellent, engaged teacher in every classroom. Currently, Washington has an estimated shortage of 3500 certificated teachers, especially in STEM, special education, ELL, early education (birth – grade 3), and elementary (k-8).<sup>1</sup>***

### Background

- In school year 2016-17, 85% of principals could not find fully-certificated teachers to fill all their teacher openings.<sup>1</sup>
- 97% of human resource directors say they are struggling or in crisis, and 74% said it is getting worse.<sup>1</sup>
- Washington's teacher workforce is less diverse (10% non-white) than students (41% non-white.) Diversifying the teacher workforce is one effective strategy to narrow Washington's opportunity gap.<sup>2,3</sup>

### Factors Causing the Shortage<sup>1</sup>

- Implementation of state-funding for **full-day kindergarten**
- Continued phase-in of **K-3 class size reduction** funding
- An increase in school district **hiring** of teachers since the "Great Recession"
- Increased **retirements** of the "baby-boomer" generation
- Student enrollment **growth**
- A **smaller number of individuals completing teacher preparation programs**
- **New teachers leaving** the profession (20-25% attrition rate)<sup>2</sup>
- **Limited reciprocity** – Washington only accepts certification from three other states
- **Availability and costs** of alternative routes to certification

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that improve the teacher pipeline, to recruit and retain effective educators, especially in high demand, hard to fill positions, in remote locations, or high-poverty schools through several means:

1. **Funding of intentional recruitment and conditional scholarship programs**, particularly for teachers of color who reflect the communities in which they work, and in the endorsement shortage areas.
2. **Expansion of alternative routes to certification** that have been approved by the Professional Educator Standards Board.
3. **Address the barrier of limited reciprocity.** Washington only accepts transfer of second-tier certification from three other states. **E2SHB 1341 (2017)**<sup>3</sup> made changes to second-tier professional certification requirements, necessitating a re-evaluation of Washington's reciprocity rules.
4. **Expansion of programs that improve teacher retention rates** through phased-in expansion of Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST)<sup>4</sup> grants to all schools.

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***WSPTA recognizes that access to adequate nutrition and healthy eating habits are a cornerstone to health, well-being, learning, and academic achievement. Breakfast at school can improve attendance and academic achievement, but is not widely available.<sup>1</sup> Current Washington law (WAC 392-157-125 "Time for Meals") does not clearly define the minimum amount of time for students to eat a meal, and many students do not have adequate time, based on the national standard. Additionally, some school districts subject students to shaming practices if they have meal debt.***

### Background

One in every five (20%) of children in Washington struggle with hunger<sup>1</sup>

- **Washington ranks 45th out of 50 states** in reaching low-income students with nutritious school breakfasts<sup>2</sup>; 67% of eligible low-income students do not eat school breakfast, due to transportation schedule or social stigma. Without a healthy breakfast, a student's chance of success is drastically reduced.<sup>1</sup>
- **OSPI included longer lunch and recess times in the 2017 long term vision.**<sup>3</sup>
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) both recommend **20 minutes of seated time for school lunch.**<sup>4,5</sup>
- In 2015, the University of Washington (UW) School of Public Health Nutritional Sciences found that **NONE** of the elementary schools observed in their study achieved 20 minutes of seated time. **The average was 13 minutes**, and many students had much less time.<sup>6</sup>
- The CDC, USDA and UW School of Public Health Nutritional Sciences recommend **Recess Before Lunch (RBL)**. The UW study found when RBL is in place, **students consume 67% more food, 54% more fruits and vegetables, and both plate waste and discipline referrals decreased.**<sup>6</sup>
- Meal debt is a challenge for districts and policies for dealing with meal debt vary widely. Some school districts engage in "**meal debt shaming**": students have been humiliated with a hand-stamp or sticker proclaiming, "I need lunch money," or have been served a meal only to have it taken away and dumped in the garbage when they get to the register.<sup>7</sup> **The USDA has developed best practices for dealing with meal debt**, including adoption of policies that allow children to receive the nutrition they need to stay focused during the school day, and to minimize identification of children with insufficient funds to pay for school meals, in order to avoid embarrassment and stigmatization.<sup>8</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that:

- Use CDC and USDA recommendations to clearly define a minimum lunch period for students as a minimum of 20 minutes of **seated** time. **Amend WAC 392-157-125 "Time for Meals" to define a minimum of 20 minutes of seated time**, in line with national standards as well as RCW 28A.405.460<sup>9</sup>, WAC 296-126-092<sup>10</sup>, and WAC 296-125-0285<sup>11</sup>.
- **Promote Recess Before Lunch.**
- **Prohibit meal debt policies that shame or punish students.** Communications regarding finances should be directed to the parents and guardians, not the children.
- **Promote policies that increase access to school breakfast**, including Breakfast after the Bell.

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***WSPTA acknowledges that for students, Career Connected Learning (CCL) can turn the promise “to deliver a K-12 education that prepares Washington’s students for career, college and life”<sup>1</sup> into a reality. CCL incorporates real-life, hands-on education into everyday lessons so that K-12 students can explore career options and envision a successful future. This can be achieved with general classroom exploration and through Career & Technical Education (CTE).***

***Washington state has a huge labor gap in a multitude of careers including STEM (science, technology, engineering and math), manufacturing, construction, healthcare and others.<sup>2,3</sup>***

## Background

- A 2016 report on jobs in Washington projects that by 2020, **70% of all job openings in Washington will require some post-secondary education<sup>2</sup>**, and yet:
  - 25% of all 9<sup>th</sup> grade students will fail to graduate high school<sup>2</sup>, but 81% of high school dropouts report that relevant, real-world opportunities would have kept them in school.<sup>4</sup>
  - CCL and CTE expand and enhance K-12 outcomes, relevance and increase the Washington state high school graduation rate by 18%.<sup>5</sup>
  - Only 31% of high school graduates earn a post-secondary credential within seven years.<sup>2</sup>
  - Concentrating on a CTE subject in high school increases the postsecondary completion rate from 31% to 75%.<sup>4</sup>
- Starting the **CTE and STEM commitment in high school is critical for our students and our state’s economic prosperity.**

**Washington state has a critical STEM workforce gap** and CTE/CCL can help fill that void with family wage jobs and career advancements.<sup>3</sup>

- Washington **ranks #1 in concentration of STEM jobs** and #3 in STEM job growth.
- BUT, our state is the **#1 importer of degrees in the nation** (proportion of population).
- Washington **ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the U.S.** in the production of STEM degrees relative to job openings.
- Washington **ranks last among the top 15 high-tech-intensive states** in the percent of high school graduates who go directly to college.

## Previous Legislation

- The “**Launch Year Act**” (HB1808 (2011)<sup>6</sup>, RCW 28A.230.130) encourages all public high schools to maximize a student’s 12<sup>th</sup> grade by earning at least one year of post-secondary credit towards a degree or certificate, but was an “unfunded suggestion”.
- **ESB 2242** (2017),<sup>7</sup> the K-12 funding bill, expanded CTE programs with funding, lowered class-sizes, and competitive grants.
  - Missing is elementary CCL programs to inspire and engage students into STEM and other careers.
  - The expanded “High School and Beyond Plan” is a good start, but school districts need to implement, innovate, and support CCL and CTE opportunities and increase the number of career counselors.

## Proposed Solutions

Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that **support Career Connected Learning K-12 programs that inspire, provide training, expanded CTE options, and weave real-life career options in STEM, manufacturing, construction, etc. into K-12 classrooms. The new 2017-19 budget expanded CTE and we need to build on that to implement new programs at the state and local levels.**

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***WSPTA recognizes that dual credit exam courses allow a student to simultaneously earn a high school degree and earn post-secondary college/university credit. Dual credit courses increase high school graduation rates, reduce costly tuition and increase college enrollment and degree completion rates.***

## Background

- Currently there are three types of nationally-recognized dual credit exam courses (aka concurrent classes) which include: Advanced Placement (AP), International Baccalaureate (IB) and Cambridge International (CI)
- The number of classes and type of exam vary across the state and there is a lack of transparency on which exam scores are required to earn college credit.
- Statewide, in school year 2014-15:
  - 18% of all high school students (72,500) took 247,537 high school credits in one of these three (AP, IB & CI) dual-credit programs, with an average of 3+ classes per student, totaling about 215,500 exam classes.<sup>1</sup>
  - Overall, 78% of eligible districts offer at least one type of dual credit exam program. Demographic diversity for dual credit exam classes is representative of the state's 9<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade population, but there is an opportunity to expand minority and low-income student participation, particularly in AP courses.<sup>1,2</sup>
- There is also a lack of guardian awareness about the benefits of "concurrent/dual-credit" opportunities across all segments, especially under-represented groups.<sup>1</sup>

## Previous Legislation

- **"Launch Year Act"**<sup>3</sup> (HB1808 (2011), RCW 28A.230.130) which encourages all public high schools to maximize a student's 12<sup>th</sup> grade but was an "unfunded suggestion".
  - "...Within existing resources districts shall expand and inform students/families, especially under-represented groups, about options to earn at least one year of post-secondary credit towards a CTE certificate, apprenticeship, AA/AS or BA/BS degree, thereby, "Launching" their careers while still in high school..."
- **ESB 5234 (2017)**<sup>4</sup> maximizes the number of students getting AP credit in Washington state colleges/universities who earn a score of 3 or higher and requires that passing policies must be posted on college and university websites. However, IB and CI dual credit exam classes were not addressed.

## Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that:

- **Establish a coordinated, evidence-based policy for granting as many undergraduate credits as possible to students who have received a passing grade on any dual credit course exam.**
- **Support adequate funding and the expansion of these programs to cover family outreach, supplies, staff and staff training.**
- **Support adequate funding for credit exams so that all students have equitable access to exams upon course completion.**

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***WSPTA recognizes there is strong evidence that students whose families are engaged with school have better outcomes – higher grades, increased enrollment in rigorous classes, and higher graduation and postsecondary enrollment rates – regardless of income or background.<sup>1</sup> Educators identify family engagement as one of the most challenging aspects of their work.<sup>2</sup> Parent Involvement Coordinators (PICs) are part of the prototypical school funding model, but the PIC role has no defined duties, and the funding is for allocation purposes only;<sup>3</sup>***

### Background

- The Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee (EOGOAC) was created in the 2009 legislative session to address the opportunity gap in Washington State (RCW 28A.300.136). The EOGOAC has highlighted **family and community engagement as a key component of an integrated student supports model to close opportunity gaps.**<sup>4</sup>
- The Washington legislature acknowledged the importance of family engagement by adding **Parent Involvement Coordinators (PICs) to the prototypical school funding model** in SHB 2776 (2010), but does not mandate that the funds be spent on the staffing positions they are allocated for in the model. In 2014-15, the state allocated 107.76 full-time equivalents (FTE) to staff PICs, but school districts actually staffed only 46.54 FTE.<sup>3</sup>
- In SSHB 1408 (2016), the legislature instructed the Office of the Education Ombuds (OEO) to make recommendations on the definition and framework for PICs.<sup>3</sup>
- Following the release of the recommendations, **SHB 1618 (2017)** passed the House:
  - **Specifies certain minimum duties** for a family and community engagement coordinator within a school building or school district.
  - Provides that **state funding allocated to school districts for family and community engagement coordinators** in the prototypical school funding formula **may be used only for family and community engagement purposes.**
  - Replaces the term "parent involvement coordinator" in the prototypical school funding formula statute and the Learning Assistance Program statute with the term **"family and community engagement coordinator."**<sup>5</sup>
- Also in the 2017 legislative session, EHB 2242 enhanced the allocations for PICs to 1.0 FTE in all schools, but appropriations were only made for 1.0 FTE for PICs at elementary schools.<sup>6</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that include the recommendations of the OEO and SHB 1618, to:

- Replace "Parent Involvement Coordinator" with the more inclusive "Family and Community Engagement Coordinator" in the prototypical schools funding formula;
- Support adoption of a clear definition and title for Family and Community Engagement Coordinators;
- Expand funding for at least 1.0 FTE Family and Community Engagement Coordinator per school, starting with high-poverty schools first, by 2020-21; and
- Specify that those funds can only be used for family and community engagement.

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# Equity for Highly Capable (HiCap)

## 2018 WSPTA Legislative Priority

**WSPTA's vision is to make every child's potential a reality. WSPTA recognizes that for those identified, access to highly capable programs is part of their basic education. Demographic data show that school districts are not implementing best practices for equitably identifying highly capable students.**

### Background

HiCap programs are a vital "whole child" intervention for unique students who would likely not be successful with a conventional approach. HiCap students have challenges in social development, emotional regulation, delayed development of executive function, and are at significant risk of not developing grit or a growth mindset if schoolwork is always "easy" for them. Behavior problems and underachievement are rampant – and start early in elementary school. Talented students are getting lost in the system. Some of our state's most vulnerable children are habitually overlooked for HiCap programs, which makes this inequity that much more painful. This is a social justice issue.

	Washington Total Enrollment	Identified HiCap Students
Black/African American	4%	2%
Hispanic/Latino of any race(s)	22%	9%
Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander	1%	0%
American Indian/Alaskan Native	2%	1%
Two or more races	7%	7%
White	57%	67%
Asian	7%	14%
Free or Reduced Price Meals	45%	21%
Section 504 & Special Education	16%	6%

Source: OSPI<sup>8,9</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that achieve proportional, equitable, and full representation of all demographic groups in Washington state public school highly capable programs, especially: low-income students, students with learning disabilities, English Language Learners, and students of color.

**School Districts must CHANGE outdated practices to remove systemic bias<sup>10</sup>**

Outdated District Practices		Better Practices
Teacher or parent referral required; complex, online referral forms; minimal parent communication	➡	Universal screening: ALL students in a grade level do a 30-minute non-verbal reasoning activity <sup>11,12</sup>
Saturday "cattle call" testing sessions	➡	All screening happens during the school day, in the home school, no parent transport needed
Requiring a minimum report card grade or teacher recommendation	➡	No subjective data preventing students from being considered
Assessments in English only	➡	Provide assessments in Spanish and/or use non-verbal assessments
Students must qualify on EVERY assessment given ("multiple hurdles")	➡	Students can demonstrate need for HiCap services in multiple ways ("multiple pathways")

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***WSPTA recognizes that the most vulnerable in our community need our schools to eliminate barriers and facilitate the on-time grade level progression and graduation of foster and homeless students. Currently in Washington state, foster youth graduation from high school is less than 50%, versus the state average of 79%.<sup>1</sup> Resolving to do better, the WSPTA worked with a coalition to pass SB 5241 (2017).<sup>2</sup>***

### Background<sup>3,4</sup>

- Foster and homeless youth face barriers such as moving to new schools suddenly. On average, youth in foster care face three placement changes. Each placement change equates to six months of lost academic progress.
- Schools have not been required to help students get credit for the coursework that they do complete and transfer successfully to new schools.
- There is a 15-20 percentage point gap in statewide achievement scores between foster youth and peers, and 25 percentage point gap in attainment of college degrees.
- Foster youth suffer post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) at twice the rate of PTSD as veterans returning from war.
- 50% of youth in foster care have chronic medical problems.
- 40-60% have at least one mental health disorder.
- 33% of foster youth live below the poverty line, which is 3 times the average U.S. rate.
- Foster youth are twice as likely to be pregnant by age 19.
- 1 in 5 foster youth will be homeless at least one day within a year of aging out of the foster care system.

### What Does the New Law (SB5241) Do?

- **Modifies provisions governing school district requirements** for the on-time progression and graduation of qualifying dependent students, including requiring districts to consolidate partial credit and to grant partial credits in certain circumstances.
- **Extends the provisions of qualifying students to homeless students** for the governing school district requirements for the on-time progression and graduation.
- **Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to adopt and distribute rules** related to the modified school district requirements.

### Next Steps for 2018

- Drive for the WAC (Washington Administrative Code) completion and adoption of SB 5241 at OSPI (Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) and school districts statewide.
- Champion and assist where possible the creation of the Department of Children, Youth and Families. (HB 1661 (2017)).<sup>5</sup>
- Support any upcoming 2018 bills in support of foster and homeless children.

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***WSPTA acknowledges that Washington state is not adequately graduating students to meet our state's employment needs. By 2020, 70% of all new jobs in Washington state will require some type of higher education, but currently only 31% of high school students obtain a post-secondary credential by age 26.<sup>1</sup>***

## Background

- **There is a skills gap in Washington state - Our education system isn't producing enough qualified candidates for the jobs being created.**
  - ◇ By 2002, 70% of all job openings in Washington are projected to require some post-secondary education, but only 44% of working age residents have an associate degree and only 34% have a bachelor's degree or higher.<sup>2</sup>
  - ◇ 25% of all 9<sup>th</sup> graders never graduate high school, and only 31% of high school graduates earn a post-secondary credential within seven years.<sup>1,2</sup>
  - ◇ Washington ranks 47<sup>th</sup> in the United States in direct high school to college enrollment.<sup>2</sup>
- **A post-secondary education is not affordable** for many low- and middle-income students.
  - ◇ Economic barriers limit families' ability to invest in education, student financial aid and work-study are insufficient, making taking on large debt the only solution.<sup>3</sup> Washington state has shifted the costs of tuition from the state to students; since 2001, the percentage of higher education costs students must pay has increased from 21% to 48%.<sup>3,4</sup>
  - ◇ Higher student's costs adversely affect low income students and reduce diversity in our schools. Only 21% of Latinos and 31% of Blacks have post-secondary degrees, compared to 47% for Whites and 57% for Asians.<sup>4</sup>
- **Demand for bachelor degrees exceeds the state's capacity to meeting graduation needs.** Community and technical colleges can help fill this gap, with associate degrees and Career and Technical Education (CTE) certificates. In 2014-15, only 15 colleges offered applied BA/BS degrees and only 1,037 students enrolled – not enough to meet job demands.

## Proposed Solutions

- **Start the higher education commitment in high school.**
  - ◇ **Support the College Bound Scholarship Program<sup>5</sup>**, which gives low-income students incentive to stay in school and pursue higher education; expand the program to include eligible 9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> graders whose family's income now meet the requirements.
  - ◇ **Fund the "Launch Year Act"<sup>6</sup>** which encourages all public high schools to maximize a student's 12<sup>th</sup> grade to earn one year of post-secondary college towards a bachelors or associates degree, or CTE certificate, but was an "unfunded suggestion".
- **Fund post-secondary education, and make it affordable for low- and middle-income students:** Increase funding for **State Need Grants**, which improve re-enrollment and degree completion outcomes for low-income students.<sup>7</sup>

***Washington State PTA shall initiate and/or support legislation or policies that helps Washington state to meet its economic need and close the skills gap by increasing access to and affordability of post-secondary education. This includes associate and bachelor degrees, and career and technical degrees/certificates with affordable tuition and local access to all programs while also supporting State Need Grants and College Bound Scholarship programs.***

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## Preventing and Mitigating the Impacts of Gender-based Violence 2018 WSPTA Legislative Priority

***WSPTA understands that sexual violence impacts students and families, and is a systemic problem needing far more room than one page to address cause, effect and potential “solutions”. As one of our tribal resources explains, “Sexual assault is not an exclusive act of aggression but should be considered as part of a continuum of attitudes, beliefs, and actions that support sexual violence. Sexual violence is an outgrowth of the larger issue of sexism. In order to have an impact on sexual violence, a community must take steps that address smaller issues as they relate to the larger issue.”<sup>1</sup>***

### Background

- In the Washington Healthy Youth Survey, 8% of eighth graders, 15% of tenth graders, and 17% of twelfth graders answered YES to “Have you ever been in a situation where someone made you engage in kissing, sexual touch or intercourse when you did not want to?”<sup>2</sup>
- Children with disabilities are nearly three times more likely than children without disabilities to be sexually abused. Children with intellectual and mental health disabilities appear to be the most at risk, with 4.6 times the risk of sexual abuse as their peers without disabilities.<sup>3</sup>
- Domestic violence is one of the leading causes of homelessness for women and children. In 2012, the largest subpopulation of homeless persons in Washington state was victims of domestic violence.<sup>4</sup>
- Most young people have never spoken with their parents or educators about “being sure your partner wants to have sex and is comfortable doing so before having sex” (61%) and “the importance of not pressuring someone to have sex with you” (56%) or “the importance of not continuing to ask someone to have sex after they have said no” (62%) or “too intoxicated to make a decision” (57%).<sup>5</sup>
- The effects of sexual assault can last a lifetime, rippling out to family members, school and work, communities and down through generations.<sup>6,7</sup>
- Current data indicates that one out of three girls/women WILL be raped in Washington during their lifetime. Women aged 18-24 experience higher rates of sexual assault than any other age group.<sup>8</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

WSPTA shall initiate, partner and/or support legislation or policies that:

1. Recognize the need for **gender bias and consent education** from numerous sectors of the state and its communities, beginning at an early age.<sup>9,10,11</sup>
2. **Prioritize victim-based services**; and place the financial, judicial and consent burden on the perpetrator, without questioning sexual history or victim blaming.<sup>12,13</sup>
3. Include training on the **responsibilities of Washington’s higher learning institutions and the rights of victims under Title IX**.<sup>14</sup>
4. Develop **strategies that focus on promoting social norms, teaching skills to prevent sexual violence**. Provide opportunities, both economic and social, to empower and support girls and women, while encouraging boys and men to demystify toxic masculinity.<sup>15,16</sup>

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## Removing Barriers to Implementing ECEAP (Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program) 2018 WSPTA Legislative Priority

***WSPTA recognizes that the path to a good education and successful career starts early. High-quality early learning helps children enter kindergarten ready to learn, prepared to thrive in school and beyond. Positive early childhood experiences also build the foundation for a skilled workforce, responsible community, and a thriving economy.***

### Background

ECEAP is Washington's pre-kindergarten program, serving at-risk three- and four-year olds and their families, providing preschool education, health services, intensive family support, and parent engagement and training. ECEAP addresses the needs of the whole child to ensure that gains are sustained.<sup>1</sup> ECEAP has proven results in getting children ready for kindergarten<sup>2</sup>:

- 47.4% of children are 'kindergarten ready' in 6 out of 6 developmental domains.
- For low income children, however (185% of federal poverty level (FPL)) this drops to 32.6 percent of children ready.
- For other categories measured, the numbers are even lower (Homeless 25.6%, Migrant 18.8%, Limited English 31.1%, American Indian 32.1%, Hispanic/Latino 32.3%).
- Compared to the low-income group, ECEAP participants were 11.4% more likely to be kindergarten-ready in all domains.
- Hispanic children who attended ECEAP were 21% more likely to be kindergarten-ready than their low-income peers, American Indian children were 38% more likely, Asian children 32% more likely, and African American children 14% more likely. Dual Language ECEAP children were 33% more likely to be ready than their low income dual language counterparts, and special education students were 14% more likely to be ready.

### Proposed Solutions

- Expand the number of ECEAP slots. Every year thousands of children remain on waiting lists. Research confirms that comprehensive preschool interventions work and are a strategic investment.
- Raise the income eligibility for ECEAP to enable programs to recognize risk factors and prioritize slots based on the family's and child's overall challenges rather than strictly income.
- Moving from 47.4% school-ready to Department of Early Learning's goal of 90% school-ready will require substantial expansion to ECEAP eligibility and removal of other systemic barriers such as sufficient facilities, in areas where there is need, and an ample highly-capable workforce.<sup>3</sup>



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***WSPTA supports legislation or policies that enhance school safety by incorporating restorative justice models in discipline processes while supporting family and community-based alternatives to achieve youth accountability. Reduce racial and ethnic disparities by local school districts and juvenile justice systems to institute equitable policies on discipline, safety and justice.***

***WSPTA acknowledges significant changes made to state laws regarding student discipline, juvenile justice and school-to-prison pipeline<sup>1</sup>, and encourages community entities governing youth to replace any current inequitable and punitive policies with a set of practices collectively known as restorative justice.***

### Background

- Washington state spends an average of \$160 per day per youth in state and local detention; it costs an estimated \$27 to educate a child for one day in public school.<sup>2</sup>
- 27% of Washington's sixth and eighth graders reported being bullied in the last month, on the 2016 Healthy Youth Survey. At least 10% of eighth, tenth and twelfth graders reported missing school because they did not feel safe.<sup>3</sup>
- Restorative practices create inclusive school communities, where diversity is embraced, and cultural differences understood. Schools provide a safe environment while seeing a decrease in discipline problems, bullying, vandalism and violence. Academic engagement, performance and graduation rates increase.<sup>4</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

1. WSPTA supports **equitable, inclusive and consistent statewide policies around student discipline** practices, and policies that encourage collection of current data for the **missed learning time** by students called away from class for all forms of discipline.
2. School districts **must transparently communicate differences in discipline rates** based on systemic changes in practice and culture, not carefully chosen data categories. For example, go to OSPI's "Discipline" Data & Reports web page. Choose "Gap" from the top column. In the drop-down menu Select Group, choose "Race". In the drop-down menu Select Behavior, choose "Failure to Cooperate".<sup>5</sup>
3. **Provide all stakeholders with restorative tools**; with the mindset that until Washington's abysmal American Indian discipline data starts increasing statewide, every child's potential is nowhere near becoming a reality. Support funding and practices that include native and diverse populations in the creation and implementation.<sup>6</sup>

*"Yes, we do need to make our schools safer, but we also need to take time to figure out why a student is misbehaving or not attending school – what is happening in the student's life, what is happening to his/her family. I think these two aspects can actually co-exist in a school if we put a good system in place. We can make our schools safer and, at the same time, take care of kids and families." Adie Simmons, founder of the Washington Family Engagement Trust.<sup>7</sup>*

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***WSPTA recognizes that critical investments need to be made in school facilities, to ensure that children attend schools that are modern, safe, and provide sufficient space and classrooms to comply with state-mandated class size reduction. The benefits for facilities investments include increased attendance, improved student performance, and reduced truancy and suspension rates.<sup>1</sup>***

### Background

- The School Construction Assistance Program contributes only part of the cost to build safe and healthy schools that support learning.<sup>2</sup>
- The burden of underfunding falls harder on property-poor districts, in the form of higher property tax rates on construction bonds. "Because local wealth is the primary source of capital construction funds, under investment disproportionately affects children from low-income families. The results affect both students' well-being and their educational opportunities."<sup>3</sup>
- The 2017-19 capital budget, which was not funded in 2017, does not ensure construction of classrooms to meet state policies of all-day kindergarten and smaller K-3 class sizes.<sup>4</sup>
- Washington's actual median space allocation for schools is well below the national median for new school construction for the past three years.<sup>5</sup>
- Many school districts are growing rapidly, yet the state construction programs haven't been modified to meet this growth.<sup>6</sup>
- The current Washington state framework for environmental health and safety in schools (WAC 246-366, Primary and Secondary Schools) has been in place since 1971, and has never undergone a comprehensive revision to the rules.<sup>7</sup>
- A national poll commissioned by the U.S. Green Building Council found that 92 percent of Americans believe that the quality of public school buildings should be improved.<sup>3</sup>

### Proposed Solutions

The Washington State PTA supports legislation or policies that provide:

1. **Provide stable and timely financing for school construction, modernization, and safety needs;**
  - Fund capital costs to ensure construction of classrooms to meet state policies of all-day kindergarten and smaller K-3 class sizes.
  - Apply a uniform funding policy to meet modern and FEMA standards for current and future school buildings and portables.<sup>8,9,10</sup>
2. **Update the square footage allocation formula,** which recognizes modern and inclusive educational needs for all students, and recognizes current actual construction costs.
3. Replaces the 60 percent super-majority with a **simple majority requirement for passage of school bonds;** and
4. **Extends the K-3 grant program.** More than 70 districts will require an anticipated \$230 million in additional costs to meet the ratio of 17:1 and all-day kindergarten.

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10. See also: WSPTA Resolution 11.25 Mitigating Environmental Hazards and Contaminants in Schools.

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