

## **A Selection of “1 Minute Elevator Speeches” on WA Ed Funding**

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Short, to-the-point dialogues one can share in a minute or two – let others know about the core of a problem they may not know exists.

Share your stories with us - [webmaster@fundingwaschools.org](mailto:webmaster@fundingwaschools.org) .

### **Underfunding Explained In A Minute:** by Barb Billinghamurst

Expert studies show that it would cost anywhere from \$2,000 to \$4,000 more per student to bring all students up to WA State standards and to better prepare them for the 21st century.

Meanwhile, in an era of declining funds and increasing costs, our school districts have had to make tough budget decisions.

Districts have

- put off buying textbooks to ensure they have the funds to heat their schools.
- offered small remedial classes at the cost of overcrowding regular core classes.
- eliminated librarian and counselor positions to ensure they have a sufficient number of classroom teachers.

At the same time, and what's most disheartening, is that only 18 out of 100 kids who enter 9th grade in our public schools actually go on to get some kind of degree at universities or community colleges.

Yet businesses in the trades and professions of every kind in our state are crying for more and better trained workers.

Now is the time to make an investment in our children's future. Now is the time to support the full funding of basic education.

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### **2 Minute Context of WA State Education Crisis:** by Kirsten Taniguchi

*Is there a crisis in Washington State's public education system?*

The Washington State Legislature has formed a Task Force to develop a new system for funding K-12 education in this state. The model for education funding has not been changed for 30 years.

Some facts to consider . . . .

1. In general, the state funds K-12 education on a per pupil basis. The average per pupil allocation from the state *does not cover the actual cost*. Ask your school district.
2. The state allocation pays for only 5 class periods per day. Most school districts offer students 6 or 7 periods per day. They pay for those additional periods out of levy and other funds.

3. The state legislature has passed a number of mandates, but provided *no additional funding* for school districts to comply. Unfunded mandates for the Northshore School District cost the district almost \$17 million or approximately 10% of their \$172.6 million budget. Ask your district what it costs them to comply with unfunded mandates.
4. When the state's allocation doesn't cover the actual costs, some districts make up the difference with levy funds, foundation funds, or PTA fundraisers. Not all school districts in the state can raise the same amount of funds to make up the difference, so *not all Washington State students are receiving the same basic level of services*.
5. Larger class sizes are not just a problem in your school district. Washington State ranks 46th, *fourth worst in class sizes*. (Source: NEA Ranking and estimates)
6. The Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction has currently placed *7 school districts under Binding Conditions* for the 2007-08 school year. This means that these districts could not cover their bills for the year. There have never been this many school districts so close to bankruptcy in the memory of OSPI officials.

Are you concerned?

The single most important thing you can do is to get informed and engaged. Start by talking with your local district about their concerns, then help to spread the word. Our kids are depending on it.

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**A Quick Pitch - Basic Education Funding:** by Susan Baird-Joshi

How do you decide what car to buy? You figure out what your needs are. You decide what you can afford.

You do research. You test drive cars, talk to people, check ratings in magazines.

Maybe after looking at what's available in your price range, you decide that nothing will do. Maybe it meets your immediate needs (1 year), but in the long-term it just won't work.

You rethink your funding model. Maybe you reprioritize your family budget so you can buy the car you really need for the future.

The bottom line is: you come to conclusions and arrive at solutions to get you where you need to be.

That's the logical approach.

That's what the Basic Education Finance Task Force is doing for public K-12 education in Washington State.

It's trying to decide where our kids--and our society--need to be 5, 10, 15 years from now.

And they're trying to decide how we're going to get there.

We have a unique opportunity to influence that process.

Ask BEF committee members from your school district to talk with you and the School Board about what constitutes basic education in Washington State and what we're going

to do about it in the near future.

Have you ever wondered...

- Why the school grounds are not well kept?
- Why there are no buses after athletic events?
- Why there are split classes some years?
- Why some schools have really good libraries and others don't?
- Why some special elementary schools offer foreign languages but neighborhood schools don't?
- Why teachers leave and take jobs in other districts that have lower housing costs?
- Will my child be ready for post-secondary education?
- **IS MY CHILD RECEIVING A QUALITY EDUCATION?**

This is your time to listen, learn and ask these and other questions.

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