

Funding Washington Schools

Manifesto

We believe that:

- **Public education is legally a state-wide, paramount obligation and a moral, civic commitment.**
- Public education in Washington State is severely underfunded and, despite great efforts to economize and make do with less, the quality of education is unacceptable and deteriorating.
- Any reforms enacted must be evidence-based and centered on children.
- All children can learn to high levels.

- **The primary factor in student learning is a high-quality teacher.**
- It's in the state's interest to develop and maintain a pool of high-quality teachers.
- Currently, the entry-level salary for teachers and their expected lifetime earnings are too low and not competitive in today's labor markets.
- State policies should be enacted to improve and maintain a pool of high quality teachers.
 1. Attract high quality teachers into the profession
 2. Retain those teachers once they arrive
 3. Enhance and improve individual teaching skills and knowledge
 4. Strengthen the skills and knowledge of the teaching profession
 5. Exit ineffective teachers
- State policies that develop and maintain teacher quality include those for certification, evaluation, compensation, and accountability.

- **Research has shown that best practices for increasing the state-wide level of student performance in public schools would require the state to increase:**
 1. The number of teachers, librarians, counselors, nurses and other certificated staff.
 2. The number of instructional assistants, technologists, clerical staff, maintenance workers and other classified staff.
 3. Funding for technology, classroom texts and supplies, maintenance, utilities and other non-employee-related costs.

- The 2009 estimate of **additional annual funds needed** to correct the shortage of school staff, increase teacher salaries to competitive levels, and adequately cover all non-employee-related costs **is at least \$3 billion.**
- Teachers are public employees. All public employees are accountable for their performance.
- The public will not support a huge increase in funding for public education unless it is shown that the increase is linked to improved, accountable student learning.
- Rather than to simply kill education reform legislation calling for changes in certification, evaluation, compensation, and accountability, we believe it is in the interest of all teachers for their WEA union to negotiate reasonable terms. As long as the WEA union obstructs such efforts, its teacher members will never be paid the salaries they truly deserve.

- **Like any professional, teachers must continually develop and improve their knowledge and skills over the length of their career.**
- The vast majority of teachers in our state are true professionals, dedicated to their career and constantly looking for ways to improve.
- The state has an obligation to provide mentors for new teachers and provide adequate resources for professional development.
- It is in the interest of students and their parents, and the dedicated teachers, to remove those few unprofessional, underachieving individuals from teaching.