

## **Talking Points on House Bill 1410 and Senate Bill 5444** **A Comprehensive Plan to Reform and Fully Fund Basic Education**

By Barb Billingham – February, 01, 2009

**Background:** On January 23, 2009 the Washington State PTA endorsed the final report of the Basic Education Finance Task Force. PTA endorsed this report because its recommendations are closely aligned with WSPTA principles. In sum, these recommendations provide for a comprehensive plan to reform and fully fund basic education.

State legislators have since introduced two identical bills - House Bill 1410 and Senate Bill 5444 - that would implement the Task Force's plan.

### **What would HB1410 and SB 5444 do?**

In short, these bills would provide many things that PTA parents have been advocating for many years, such as

- Smaller class sizes (this means more teachers),
- More librarians, counselors, and nurses,
- More help for struggling students, ELL students, and students in special education;
- A 6-period class day instead of a 5-period day,
- All-day kindergarten, and
- More comprehensive graduation requirements that are better aligned with both college and work-place settings.

### **What else would HB 1410 and SB 5444 do?**

1. Redefine Basic Education to include early learning programs for students from low-income families and more rigorous high school course and graduation requirements;
2. Establish an Instructional Program of Basic Education with a wide array of staff and resources;
3. Establish easy-to-understand allocation models for funding a typical Elementary School, Middle School, and High School;
4. Establish a New Teacher Compensation System and a New Career Ladder;
5. Enhance Teacher Preparation & Development;
6. Eliminate inequities in existing Local Levies and the Teacher Pay System.
7. Develop a Common Fiscal and Student Data System,
8. Develop an Accountability System based on a number of different Outcome Measures such as test scores and graduation rates
9. Give school districts the Flexibility to Spend State Allocations; but holds them Accountable for Outcomes.
10. Phase in the Plan Over a 6-Year Period beginning in 2011.

*More specifics on each of these 10 points can be found on page 3 "Key Points in HB 1410 and SB 5444 as of January 30, 2009".*

### What is PTA doing about these bills?

- The proposed bills represent extraordinarily complex legislation with many details still to be improved and developed. Washington State PTA has been actively engaged in both the development and deliberation of this legislation. Recently, our State PTA President and Advocacy Coordinator have testified in favor of HB 1410 and SB 5444. Many PTA members from across the state also testified in favor!
- PTA will continue to contribute to the deliberations on these bills with the overall goal of securing a commitment to full funding for the revised definition of basic education as soon as possible given our current economic situation.
- Our Children Can't Wait!

### **What can you do?**

- We encourage you to contact your senator and two representatives and urge their continued support for HB 1410 and SB 5444. Generic legislative email: [lastname.firstname@leg.wa.gov](mailto:lastname.firstname@leg.wa.gov).
- Have your local unit endorse the principles in HB 1410 and SB 5444. See Attachment Two.
- Come to Olympia on Thursday, Feb. 26 to join PTA's noon-time rally on the steps of the Capitol in support of basic education! See [www.wastatepta.org/leg/session\\_09.htm](http://www.wastatepta.org/leg/session_09.htm)

### **Any opposition to HB 1410 and SB 5444?**

- Yes. The Washington Education Association, the teacher's union, is the biggest group opposed to these bills. Other education groups representing superintendents, school board members, principals and classified staff also oppose the bill.
- **BUT, and this is a big but**, many members of these groups have taken a public position in favor of these bills and in opposition to their own leadership. For example, the 35 school superintendents in the Puget Sound area have publicly endorsed HB 1410 and SB 5444. Teachers have testified on behalf of the bill. The Seattle School Board supports the bills.

### **What are the main concerns of the opposition to HB 1410 and SB 5444 ?**

The opposition claims:

1. We don't need to change basic education's definition; we need to fund the existing one.
2. HB 1410 and SB 5444 represent a promise with no actual funding tied to it. We can't trust the legislature to actually fund what it promises in the bill. The Alternative bill, SB 5607, would create a basic education account. It would dedicate surplus state revenues to this account and would allow the state to dedicate a share of the state property tax to this account.
3. Pay-for-performance for teachers has no merit. SB 5607 would not change the existing pay system. See Attachment Three for Washington State Institute of Public Policy's contrasting view on this matter. (Also online at <http://www.leg.wa.gov/documents/joint/bef/Mtg04-14-08/PayInitiatives.pdf>)
4. The implementation schedule for HB 1410 and SB 5444 is not clear; funding may not arrive until 2017. The Ed Association's alternative bill, SB 5607, calls for specific increases in staffing and money in the year 2011.
5. HB 1410 and SB 5444 would allow the legislature to determine the funding for basic education based on available appropriations - not on what's actually needed for basic education.

**What Else Would the Alternative Ed Reform Bill, SB 5607, do?**

- The alternative bill, SB 5607, would also create the Commission on Quality Education in Washington to develop basic education funding formulas, forecast revenues, and study the link between funding levels and expected student achievement levels.
- The bill would task the state with developing a two-way accountability system that would hold both the state and districts responsible for student performance. Districts can't be held accountable if the problem is one of lack of funding. However, if the problem deals with management issues, then the state would provide gradual and increasing assistance to districts struggling to improve student performance.

**Key Points in HB 1410 and SB 5444 as of January 30, 2009**

**1. Redefine Basic Education to include early learning programs for students from low-income families and more rigorous high school course and graduation requirements;**

- Incorporates the state's current definition of basic education stemming from the 1993 Basic Education Act. This definition is embodied in the state's Four Basic Learning Goals and the Essential Academic Learning Requirements;
- Increases annual hours of instruction from 1,000 to 1,080 for 7<sup>th</sup> to 12<sup>th</sup> grades. Grades K-6 are each to have 1,000 hours per year.
- All grades are to have 180 days of instruction; fewer waivers from this rule to be granted.
- Increases the number of Learning Improvement Days (LID) for teachers from 2 to 10;
- Increases the number of state-funded instructional periods from 5ish to 6 in grades 7-12,
- Calls for teachers to have one planning period a day,
- Increases the minimum state graduation requirements from 19 to 24 credits.
- The new graduation credits are distributed in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, Arts, Health and a variety of electives to prepare students for college, technical school, or work.
- Phases-in the funding of voluntary all-day kindergarten, targeting low-income schools first.
- Phases-in funding for early learning programs for at-risk children ages 3 to 5.
- Basic Education programs include: regular instruction, vocational education, special education, English language learning programs, struggling students programs, transportation, education for children in state institutions, and early learning programs for at-risk children.

**2. Establishes an Instructional Program of Basic Ed with a wide array of staff and resources;**

- Establishes prototypical schools for Elementary, Middle, and High Schools; uses research-driven funding metrics based on the number of students to determine staffing and resources.
- For example, the number of core classroom teachers is allocated according to this schedule:

Class Sizes in Prototype Schools				
	High School (600) Grades 9-12	Middle School (432) Grades 7-8	Elementary School (400)	
			Grades 4-6	Grades K-3
Class size if poverty is less than 50%	25	25	25	15
Class size if poverty is 50% or more	22	22	22	15
Class size of Career & Tech Exploration	19	19	-	-
Class size of Career & Tech Preparation	16	-	-	-
Class size of Science Lab courses	19	-	-	-
Class size of AP and IB courses	19	-	-	-

- Other staffing for prototypical schools is shown below.

Allocation of Staff by Prototype School			
	High School (600) Grades 9-12	Middle School (432) Grades 7-8	Elementary School (400) Grades K-6
Principals	1.8	1.3	1.2
Teacher-librarians	1.0	1.0	1.0
School nurses or social workers	1.0	1.0	1.0
Guidance counselors,	1.5	1.0	0.0
Professional development coaches	0.75	0.50	0.50
Office support and noninstructional aides	3.0	3.0	3.0
Custodians and other maintenance	4.0	4.0	4.0
Student and staff safety	1.0	1.0	1.0

- Each school district shall receive the following allocation per student for materials, supplies, and operating costs.

Category	Per annual FTE student
Student Technology	\$200
Utilities	\$216
Curriculum, textbooks, library materials, & instructional supplies	\$155
Professional Development	\$103
Maintenance, custodial and security costs for school buildings	\$102
Central Office Administration	\$310
Total	\$1,086

- Special education would still be funded by multiplying 0.9309 against the per pupil base, which is now larger under this plan.
- Although the highly capable program is not a basic education program, the program is funded. This plan would determine a school district's highly capable allotment on 3% of a school district's entire enrollment. Current allotment is based on 2%.

**3. Establish easy-to-understand allocation models for funding a typical Elementary School, Middle School, and High School;**

- Funding allocations by prototype schools will help parents and the Legislature better understand what is being paid for and measure results. Parents will have a template against which they can compare their school's funding.

**4. Establish a New Teacher Compensation System Aligned with a New Career Ladder;**

With regard to the **new compensation system**:

- The statewide salary shall be based on three tiers of demonstrated performance that align with the three levels of certification as defined by the state's Professional Educator Standards Board: Residency, professional, and master.
- Each tier shall contain salary steps based on years of service.
- The salary schedule shall not provide increased salaries based on continuing education credits or academic degrees. In contrast, the existing statewide salary system is based only on years of experience and attainment of education credits or degrees.

- Teachers who started teaching before the 2012-13 school year have the option to transfer to the new salary system or stay in the old system. All teachers must transfer to new system by September 1, 2022.
- A compensation work group composed of all stakeholders will develop the details of the salary system and any additional compensation features.
- The work group is to recommend new competitive teacher salaries based on a survey of individuals in various regional labor markets of the state who perform work similar to teachers but are not teachers.
- The work group is to consider adjustments for regional differences in teacher salaries.
- Other compensation includes bonuses for
  1. State-certified mentors and peer-evaluators (see below),
  2. Master teachers in hard-to-serve schools as in current policy, and
  3. One-time bonus for professional certification under the current policy.
- Limit supplemental teacher contracts financed by local funds to “T” (Time) instead of “TRI” (Time, Responsibilities, Incentives)

With regard to the **New Career Ladder (Residency, Professional, Masters)**

- The state is to develop standards to serve as criteria for placing teachers in the residency and professional levels. The criteria will be based on the teacher’s knowledge, skill and performance. More specifically, the criteria will involve multiple measures of teacher performance, including in-class visits and observations and review of artifacts such as lesson plans and student work. The evaluation shall include evidence of improved student learning from statewide student formative assessments and other sources of evidence;
- Peer evaluators will judge whether teachers are in the residency or professional levels. Peer evaluators will be state-certified evaluators who are teachers with endorsements in the same or similar subjects and who are not employed by the same school district as the teacher being evaluated or do not have a conflict of interest regarding the teacher being evaluated;
- The master level will require teachers to obtain certification from the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards.
- Beginning September 1, 2012, a residency certificate issued to a teacher is valid for no more than five years of teaching. After that, teachers must advance to the professional level to continue teaching.

**5. Enhance Teacher Preparation & Development;**

- The state shall provide intensive mentoring services for first-year teachers and continue mentoring support for teachers for up to five years.
- The state shall fund 10 Learning Improvement Days (up from just 2 in current policy).

**6. Eliminate inequities in existing Local Levies and the Teacher Pay System.**

- The new compensation system would deal with inequities in the teacher pay system.
- With regard to local levies, establish a technical work group to fix the local levy system and the state’s Local Effort Assistance (LEA) program. Solutions should:
  1. Define local levy authority as a percentage of per student amount;
  2. Provide state-funded matching assistance to equalize a portion of the per-student amount in property tax-poor school districts that demonstrate a level of local effort in authorizing a local levy; and
  3. Eliminate historic grandfathering of local levy authority.

## **7. Develop a Common Fiscal and Student Data System**

- Use a common, standardized structure for cost classifications
- Report program costs at school and district level
- Separately account for state and local revenues and costs
- Connect information about students, performance, teachers and classes
- Link program cost information with student information

## **8. Develop an Accountability System based on a number of different Outcome Measures such as test scores and graduation rates**

- Develop an accountability index to identify schools and districts based on multiple measures of student achievement. The index will measure extended graduation rates and results from statewide assessments among other things.
  - Evaluation of schools/districts will consider index, progress in making improvements, and comparison to similar schools/districts.
  - Recognize exemplary schools/districts
  - Provide assistance to struggling schools/districts
- Tailor assistance to need of struggling schools/districts
  - Voluntary but intensive assistance (“Innovation Zone”) for persistently struggling schools/districts
- If no significant improvement over time, then require action through binding performance contract (Academic Watch)
- The state will develop a system of formative assessments to measure individual improvement in student learning throughout the school year and from one school year to the next.
  - The assessment will provide periodic information during the school year about an individual student’s academic progress that is useful to parents and teachers.
  - To the maximum extent possible, be administered online and with immediate results.

## **9. Give school districts the Flexibility to Spend State Allocation; but holds them Accountable for Outcomes.**

- Most allocations remain ‘for allocation purposes only;’ districts have choice about how funds are spent,
- LAP and Bilingual are categorical - must be spent on eligible student - but districts have spending discretion over type of researches purchased,
- Overall, plan offers more spending flexibility to districts than current system; but holds districts accountable for outcomes.

## **10. Phase in the Plan Over a 6-Year Period beginning in 2011.**

- By the 2016-17 school year, appropriations of state funds to school districts must be enough to support the instructional program described above.
- Beginning with the 2011-12 school year, the legislature shall appropriate funds for the instructional program of basic education using the structure of the funding formulas described above, but the legislature may incrementally phase-in the implementation of the numeric values in the formulas until full implementation is achieved in the 2016-17 school year.

- Within the six-year time frame (2011-2017), the priorities for phasing-in full implementation are:
  1. Maintenance, supplies, and operating costs and salary allocations for administrative and classified staff and certificated instructional staff;
  2. Phasing-in all-day kindergarten
  3. The learning assistance program for struggling students and the transitional bilingual instructional program to make progress in closing the achievement gap;
  4. Increasing the number of at-risk children served under the basic education program of early learning; and
  5. Class size reduction in grades K-3.

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[www.fundingwaschools.org](http://www.fundingwaschools.org)

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