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WASA to Lawmakers: 'Put Students First!'

2027 Legislature urged to deliver on the promise of public education

OLYMPIA — July 20, 2026 — Washington school administrators are urging lawmakers to put students first in the 2027 legislative session and make good on the promise of public education.

Details of the new legislative agenda approved by members of the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) call on the Legislature to adequately fund **The Big Three**:

1. **Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC)** – Inflation is driving significant fiscal challenges for districts given the continued increases in insurance, transportation fuel, technology needs, and other essential operational costs.
2. **Special Education** – Students with disabilities deserve timely, individualized support. Full state funding is essential to ensure districts can meet every student's needs without straining other essential programs and services.
3. **Substitute Costs** – The state requires districts to provide a minimum of 10 days of paid sick leave but funds just four. As a result, local districts must backfill sub costs, diverting money from classroom and student learning.

"The world our children are inheriting asks more of them than ever before. It will require more knowledge, stronger critical thinking, greater adaptability, and deeper collaboration than any generation before them," said WASA Executive Director Jeff Snell. "Preparing students for that future requires all of us, educators, families, communities, and policymakers, to invest in the opportunities they need to succeed. We should be investing more in their future, not less.

"Keeping the promise of public education is not simply about funding schools. It is about preparing each child to thrive and strengthening the future of our communities and our state," he continued. "Delivering on that promise requires sustained investment in the foundational components of public education."

WASA members continue to identify Special Education, Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs, and Substitute Costs as the areas where the gap between expectations and funding is greatest, Snell added. These are not optional expenditures: they are essential investments that ensure each student, regardless of where they live, has access to the opportunities they deserve, he said.

“Washington’s Constitution establishes education as the state’s paramount duty, but our responsibility extends beyond meeting a constitutional obligation,” Snell added. “Public education is a shared promise among the state, schools, families, and communities. Keeping the promise of public education means matching our aspirations for children with our investments in their future. Investing in children is not an expense. It is one of the wisest investments we can make in our collective future. The future we build for our children is the future we all share.”

To address these shortfalls, WASA is calling on the Legislature to implement several policy adjustments in the 2027 session, including:

- Reforming tort and liability laws that drive escalating insurance costs.
- Protecting taxpayers from abusive public record requests that consume staff time and taxpayer funding.
- Fully funding, revising, or eliminating unfunded mandates on school districts.
- Maintaining investments in Transition to Kindergarten and Local Effort Assistance to support educational opportunity and funding equity.

Manson Superintendent and WASA President Tabatha Mires said the financial challenges facing public schools have never been greater.

“It doesn’t matter if you are in Bellevue, Battle Ground, Manson or Spokane: school districts are reeling from the impacts of inflation, and it’s affecting every aspect of our budgets,” said Mires. “The fiscal demands on school districts continue to impact our ability to meet the needs of student and the families who choose public education for their children. Students deserve well-resourced schools so they can focus on reading and mathematics in a safe learning environment. What the state is currently offering districts – of any size – is simply not enough,” she added.

“We are asking for legislators to put students first in the coming legislative session so that each student has the opportunity to reach their full potential.”

View the 2027 WASA legislative priorities here.

About the Washington Association of School Administrators

The Washington Association of School Administrators is committed to the development of quality education through professional leadership. Members benefit from a supportive community of professional leaders working to provide insightful and valuable training, support,

and resources to education leaders, and to sustain a positive impact on legislative and community leaders. With over 1,985 members, membership is open to all education administrators in central office, building management, and educational agency positions. A not-for-profit organization, WASA is funded by membership dues and association events.

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