

WEA 2019 Legislative Priorities



Washington Education Association members stand united for our public schools and students.

As professional educators and union members, we are proud of our state's historic progress toward fully funding public education.

Now we must protect our progress and build on that success. WEA members are committed to working together to ensure all 1.1 million Washington students have the amply funded, high-quality public schools guaranteed by our state Constitution.

Three of WEA's top legislative priorities for 2019 are directly related to improving or implementing the McCleary school funding package the Legislature adopted in 2017 and 2018:

- Restore much-needed local levy flexibility to allow local voters to meet the needs of their students beyond state-funded basic education.
- Fully fund the new state-run health insurance system for educators as negotiated with the state.
- Increase funding for additional school support staff to meet students' mental health, social, emotional and safety needs.

Here are WEA's overall priorities for 2019 legislative session:

UNITED FOR OUR STUDENTS

- Support safe schools by funding professional counselors, paraeducators, and other staff to meet the mental health, social, emotional and safety needs of students
- Provide students the individual attention they need and give educators the tools and resources to help every student succeed
- Eliminate high-stakes testing requirements for graduation
- Support the rights of all students to a quality public education regardless of family background or immigration status
- Provide full funding for special education students and the services they need

UNITED FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

- Provide significant funding for colleges and universities to attract and retain qualified faculty and staff
- Increase the number of professional counselors to meet the needs of students in community and technical colleges
- Increase state need grant funding to reduce student debt and make college more affordable for low-income students

UNITED FOR RETIRED EDUCATORS

- Provide a full cost-of-living adjustment (COLA) for Plan 1 retirees and increase health care subsidies for all retirees
- Allow all retirees to return to work part time without reducing their retirement benefits

UNITED FOR K-12 EMPLOYEES

- Ensure aspiring educators receive instruction and tools for culturally responsive teaching
- Improve and protect certification processes, fair employment practices and continuing contract rights, and ensure national certifications are recognized and valued
- Provide student loan forgiveness for educators
- Protect union rights and educators' role in education policy decisions, including the academic freedom to use age-appropriate LGBTQ subject matter
- Ensure employees have access to affordable quality health care
- Provide dedicated funding for paraeducator training
- Improve the revised K-12 funding formulas by addressing regionalization costs, staff experience factors, and local levy capacity

