

2011-13 Supplemental Biennium Budget

Guiding Principles and Priorities for Funding Public Education

Stand for Children recommends the following strategic priorities for the legislature's consideration based on our guiding principles and thoughts about how to best prioritize funding to impact student achievement.

Guiding Principles:

- Funding Basic Education is a paramount duty of the state
- Commitments to improve education through strategic reform initiatives must be upheld
- Existing programs must reexamine spending practices to ensure efficacy and to maximize impact
- Decisions must be based on implementing strategic investments in programs with proven outcomes

How to Prioritize:

- Prioritize funding supports to improve under-performing schools and close opportunity gaps
- Prioritize funding with the greatest impact on student learning
- Prioritize funding for our youngest students to cut expensive remediation costs down the line directly

Stand for Children Priorities:

- 1) Full Day Kindergarten and WaKIDs for the State's Poorest Students
- 2) Teacher and Principal Evaluations
- 3) Teacher Mentoring
- 4) High School Graduation Exams

What should the state prioritize funding?

STAY THE COURSE WITH ENHANCED BASIC EDUCATION BY FUNDING FULL DAY KINDERGARTEN

- Full Day Kindergarten for the State's Poorest Students
- WaKIDS

Funding Basic Education is the paramount duty of the state. In recent years, the state has committed to a new definition of basic education (House Bill 2261; House Bill 2776). Legislators have made the smart choice of phasing changes into the classrooms of our neediest and youngest students by funding full day kindergarten in our poorest classrooms. By helping our most at-risk students start school on solid footing, the state will avoid expensive remediation down the line. Research shows that students who attend full-day kindergarten show significantly greater achievement throughout their education career than students who attend half-day kindergarten. In addition, full-day kindergarten has been shown to have a positive social impact on children and families. The legislature should maintain funding for the 22% of schools that will receive full day kindergarten by the end of the biennium. While the new definition of basic education also includes adjusted funding for K-3 class size reductions, maintenance, supplies and operating costs (MSOC) and transportation costs, the state should prioritize funding that directly impacts students over these costs.

- 72% of Washington voters favor providing voluntary full day kindergarten. (33% Strongly support, 39% somewhat favor; Stand for Children, 2009)

CONTINUE FUNDING FOR TEACHERS TO DEVELOP THEIR CRAFT

- The Teacher and Principal Evaluation Pilot Project
- Teacher Mentoring (BEST)

Teachers have the greatest impact on student achievement inside schools. Last year the legislature took a significant step forward in improving these evaluation systems by passing Senate Bill 6696. A two year project is now underway in pilot districts to develop and implement new teacher and principal evaluation systems. As this pilot progresses, it will provide meaningful feedback on the best systems to use as a model for our state. Continued funding is needed to ensure these districts are able to complete their work and not waste the funds already invested. Furthermore, **additional resources will be needed from the state to ensure evaluators are training properly and that educators receive professional development so that they understand and trust the new system.** Another way the state should continue investing in teachers is by supporting the development of teachers' craft. By investing in teacher mentoring through the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST), the state improves the quality of instruction and helps to reduce expensive teacher attrition rates.

- 87% of Washington voters agree that new teachers should be provided with two years of mentoring and support. (47% strongly agree, 40% somewhat agree; Stand for Children, 2009).

CAREER AND COLLEGE READY EXPECTATIONS FOR ALL STUDENTS

➤ *High School Math And Science Graduation Exams*

High-performing schools set high expectations for all students. When students are challenged, both students and teachers achieve at the highest levels. By requiring students to pass math and science end-of-course exams, Washington State can increase the number of students graduating ready for rewarding careers or higher education. Many students graduate without the math and science knowledge needed for today's jobs. Forcing them to pay for expensive remedial courses down the line. In fact 54% of Washington high school graduates who enter community and technical colleges directly from high school require remediation, costing the state \$17 million annually.

In Florida, since the implementation of rigorous high school exit exams, graduation rates have increased, college remediation rates have dropped and overall student performance has increased—especially for minority students. For example, Hispanic students in Florida now perform better in reading than the statewide average for all students in 31 states—including Washington.