



WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL BUSINESS OFFICIALS 2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



The Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) advocates for the following legislative actions to ensure sustainable funding for the K-12 public education finance system:

2025 KEY PRIORITIES

Increase **MSOC** Funding
Fully Fund **Special Education**
Enhance **Pupil Transportation** Funding
Fully Fund **Substitute Costs**

Updates to these priorities are essential to safeguarding district resources and ensuring local levies can **enhance** education rather than **filling** funding gaps for basic operational needs.

► **MATERIALS, SUPPLIES & OPERATING COSTS (MSOC) ALLOCATIONS**

While staffing remains the largest school district expense, non-staff costs are significant. The Legislature provides funding for these through MSOC at a set rate per student, but this funding has not kept up with actual district expenses. For example:

- **Insurance costs have increased by over 100% in five years.**
- **Utility costs have risen by more than 40%.**

With these increasing costs, MSOC funding falls short, forcing districts to rely on local levy revenue meant to enhance education - not cover basic costs like insurance and utilities. These are not "enhancements" but essential expenses. Paying for basic costs often comes at the expense of building maintenance and other critical needs.

WASBO urges the Legislature to increase MSOC funding to reflect actual district expenses, ensuring that essential services are covered without straining local levies.

► **FULLY FUND SPECIAL EDUCATION**

Despite the Legislature's investments over the last 5 years, Special Education remains underfunded, forcing districts to rely on local levies to meet state and federal mandates.

To ensure students are not negatively impacted, **WASBO urges the Legislature to fully fund Special Education** by:

- **Increasing tiered multipliers**
- **Eliminating the enrollment cap**
- **Removing the safety net threshold**

Both the enrollment cap and the safety net threshold are policy decisions made by the Legislature that are neither required nor consistent with providing a free, appropriate public education to our students.



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► PUPIL TRANSPORTATION

We appreciate the Legislature's continued provision of additional funding to address the excess costs of transporting special passengers, such as special education, foster, and McKinney-Vento students. However, over the past five years, most districts have received transportation allocations that fall short of covering their actual costs, creating significant funding gaps.

Much of this gap stems from the current formula, which does not fully account for the unique needs and higher costs associated with special passengers.

WASBO urges the Legislature to:

- **Increase dedicated funding for transporting special passengers**
- **Create a data-driven safety net process** that offers flexibility for districts with unique transportation needs not covered by the existing formula.

These changes are crucial to ensuring that districts can meet their transportation obligations without having to rely on local funds to fill the gaps.



► FULLY FUND SUBSTITUTE COSTS (FOR REQUIRED STAFF LEAVE)

Under **RCW 28A.400.300**, school districts are required to provide a **minimum of 10 days** of leave for both classified and certificated staff. However, the state currently only provides funding for certificated teacher substitutes for 4 days per basic education-funded teacher FTE at a rate of \$151.86 per day, which equates to approximately \$16 per hour.

At this time, there is no funding received for classified substitutes. This leaves a significant gap in covering the actual cost of substitutes, forcing districts to use local levy funds or other resources to meet this shortfall. In addition, school districts are also required to provide sick leave to substitutes under state law, further increasing the financial burden on districts without additional funding from the state.



WASBO urges the Legislature to fully fund the costs associated with required staff leave by:

- **Increasing the number of substitute days funded** to reflect the actual minimum leave required by law (10 days per FTE).
- **Provide funding for substitute costs for all staff FTE funded**
- **Adjusting the daily substitute rate to align with actual market rates and local cost-of-living factors**, ensuring districts can secure qualified substitute teachers.
- **Providing additional funding to cover the cost of sick leave for substitutes**, as mandated by state law, to alleviate the financial strain on districts.

By fully funding substitute costs, including sick leave for substitutes, districts can focus local levy funds on enhancing education, rather than covering essential staffing requirements.

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