



2026 Legislative Agenda

Literacy

Washington must prioritize comprehensive literacy policies to ensure every child becomes a proficient reader. While states like California, Maryland, and Oregon have invested heavily in structured literacy through universal screening, professional learning, coaching, and state-approved curricula, Washington lags behind with only partial measures and no dedicated funding or coaching support. Research shows that early literacy success drives long-term academic achievement, yet Washington lacks a statewide mandate for universal screening, robust teacher preparation aligned to the Science of Reading and sustained professional development. By adopting a comprehensive approach—similar to leading states—Washington can close gaps, strengthen educator capacity, and guarantee equitable access to evidence-based literacy instruction for all students.

Fully Fund Special Education Services

We call on the legislature to immediately and fully fund special education services. The current funding model forces districts to use basic education dollars to cover special education costs, undermining both programs. This practice violates the constitutional mandate for full funding and must end. Highline Public Schools leads the nation in inclusion, believing that inclusion is not a place, but a practice, and we are committed to fully including all students in our general education program. The legislature must provide the resources necessary to fulfill this promise.

Address Underfunding of Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC)

We demand that the legislature increase MSOC allocations to match actual district costs. Insurance, food, and fuel expenses have surged, yet per-pupil MSOC rates remain inadequate. The legislature must act to prevent districts from relying on local levies to cover basic operational expenses. Current funding levels do not reflect the actual costs of running a school district, and immediate action is required to close this gap.

Support Capital Facilities

We urge the legislature to pass a constitutional amendment lowering the bond validation threshold to a simple majority. This action will unlock critical infrastructure projects and reflect community will. We also demand updates to K-12 construction funding formulas to ensure schools meet modern standards and actual costs. These reforms are essential for sustainable, effective education infrastructure and will provide students with learning environments that foster innovation and growth.

Student Transportation

We call on the legislature to comprehensively fix the state's transportation program to ensure that it is transparent, predictable, and funded. The legislature must restore the transportation “safety net” funding to provide transportation revenue for students who qualify for McKinney-Vento or special education transportation. Moreover, the Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (STARS) has consistently underfunded pupil transportation costs and must be fixed. This underfunding is particularly detrimental to students experiencing homelessness, students in foster care, and students who receive special education services.