

FINDING A WAY

FORWARD



LEAGUE OF EDUCATION VOTERS

2014 ANNUAL REPORT

WASHINGTON STATE HAS
THE PEOPLE, RESOURCES,
AND INNOVATIVE SPIRIT
TO CREATE THE BEST PUBLIC
EDUCATION SYSTEM
IN THE WORLD.

BUT IT'S GOING TO
TAKE TOUGH DECISIONS
FROM EACH OF US TO
MAKE IT A REALITY.

2014 was a successful year for those of us working to improve public education in Washington state. Thanks to your support, the League of Education Voters (LEV) and the LEV Foundation worked with partners to shape education policy debates, built powerful coalitions, and grew the number of grassroots advocates in order to improve education outcomes for all our students.

During 2014, LEV partnered with the Excellent Schools Now Coalition to pass the College and Career Ready Diploma. Parents and community members advocated for eight years to pass this law, which requires students, beginning with the class of 2019, to have 24 credits to graduate from high school. With this updated diploma, more Washington students will graduate high school prepared for both college and career.

2014

Passage of the meaningful high school diploma (SB 6552), legislation that authorizes the State Board of Education to implement their recommended 24-credit high school graduation requirements.



We trained over 850 parents, family, and community members to advocate for education improvements and the issues impacting our kids and schools. In addition to our annual Puget Sound training, we partnered with community-based organizations and school districts to offer trainings across the state.

We expanded our Lunchtime LEVinar series to offer webinars on timely issues, including high-quality early learning, transforming school discipline, and school funding.

In late 2014, we released *A Way Forward*, LEV's vision for what a high-quality public education system—from early learning through higher education—should include.

The stories that follow are just a few of the highlights from 2014 made possible through the generous support of our donors.

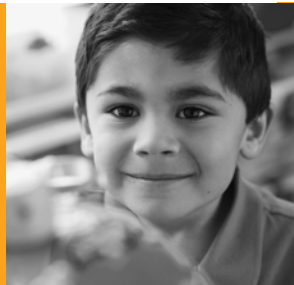
Activists of the month

In our monthly e-newsletter, *Ed Advocate*, we highlight the work of parents and community members who advocate with LEV on behalf of all Washington students.

During 2014, Quontica and Marlando Sparks were two of LEV's Activists of the Month. They testified at the State Board of Education about the College and Career Ready Diploma, as well as in the State Legislature about the need to transform school discipline.



Passage of the Real Hope Act, also called the Dream Act (SB 6523), legislation that expands college financial aid and makes college more accessible for all students regardless of their immigration status.



Increase of \$1 billion in education funding for the 2013–15 biennium, which includes doubling the number of students enrolled in full-day kindergarten and WaKIDS.

Quontica and Marlando have both worked for their school district, so they are familiar with the way the public school system works. Quontica says that they were two of a handful of African American staff members in the district and many parents in the community approached them for help and advice in navigating the system. Through word of mouth, Quontica and Marlando became the de facto experts in their community on parental rights and advocacy within the public education system.

Quontica and Marlando believe that parent engagement can be the deciding factor between a child's success or failure.

In their case, Quontica and Marlando's oldest son had an Individualized Education Program (IEP) and ran into obstacles with the special education system in school.

2014 Activists of the Month

Sarah Butcher
Betsy Cohen
Lynda Collie-Johnson
Maria Estrada
Connie Gerlitz
Ashley Guerra
Jennifer Karls
Linda Lozano
Adel Sefrioui
Beth Sigall
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Quontica & Marlando Sparks
Paulina Zepeda

In addition, the family lived in Oregon for two of the years that their son was in high school, and the coursework he completed in Oregon did not align with Washington state curriculum.

“The only way he made it through high school and moved on to college,” says Quontica, “is thanks to his determination and our unwavering engagement and involvement.”

But Quontica says they reflected on more than their own children or their own experiences when taking action with LEV.

“At my job in the district office, I watched so many kids trying and failing to make it through. Their stories all too often had a sad ending, and I want to change that.”



Passage of SB 6163 created the Expanded Learning Opportunities Council to research and recommend solutions to reduce summer learning loss and implement a pilot program to extend the school year.



Regardless of what the future holds for Quontica and Marlando, you can rest assured that they will be engaging with, and advocating for, parents and youth throughout their community—and throughout the state.

Graduating all students college and career ready in Washington

During 2014, we worked with our partners in the Excellent Schools Now Coalition to pass the College and Career Ready Diploma (SB 6552), which requires all students, beginning with the class of 2019, to graduate with a 24-credit high school diploma.

Following the bill’s passage, LEV worked with a group of parents and community members who testified at a State Board of Education meeting in which the implementation rules for the new legislation were being established. Seventeen people



Passage of SB 6129 improved career pathways and professional development opportunities for paraeducators.



Passage of SB 6424 established the Washington State Seal of Biliteracy and recognized high school graduates who are proficient in speaking, reading, and writing in one or more languages in addition to English.

testified, including African American and Latino parents and students, foster parents, parents of students with special needs, grandparents, and Spanish-speaking parents.

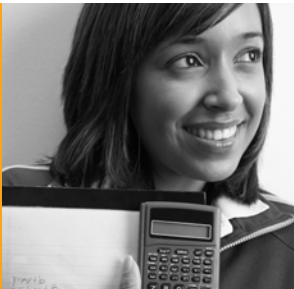
These advocates successfully communicated to the State Board the importance of maintaining the new law's academic rigor. As a result, the Board voted that the only credits that could be waived were electives and non-core academic courses. The advocates also successfully convinced the Board that parental engagement is a key component to a student's success. The Board voted that parental signoff on the third year of math and science must take precedence over school staff decisions and that districts must work to make course materials requiring parental signoff available in the parent's native language.

ACCION: LEV Foundation's parent & community training

“Sending my child to school is the only way I can ensure he doesn't have to work as hard as I do; it is the only way out for my family. But I cannot speak English, so how am I going to make sure that he succeeds in school?”

This is one of the many stories that can be heard in Washington's Yakima Valley. Located in eastern Washington and known for its lively agricultural communities and large production of hops, it is also home to a large and vibrant Latino community that makes up approximately 40 percent of the population.

While public education is confusing and complicated for a lot of people, navigating the system can be particularly challenging for Yakima's Latino community, as many parents only speak Spanish and work long hours in the fields trying to provide for their families.



“LEV empowers me to find and use my own voice.” —Sharon Taubel



During one Saturday morning in June 2014, the LEV Foundation partnered with Inspire Development Centers and the Sunnyside School District to offer an all-day training—*Parents Partnering in Education*—for over 200 parents and family and community members.

The all-day event included nearly 20 different workshops and presentations, with topics like the basics of advocacy, the importance of early learning, transforming school discipline, graduating college ready, and how to best support children with special needs.

At the end of the day, over 200 parents and family and community members left inspired and ready to take “ACCION” on behalf of their children and schools.

“My work with LEV has raised my awareness to the systemic issues we face in public education. LEV has provided me with valuable tools to speak up, step up, and enact change.”
—Juliet Perry



“I advocate for kids because it matters. I have always cared about education but LEV gave me the tools and knowledge to translate that concern into meaningful action.”
—Betsy Cohen

LEV Foundation by the numbers in 2014

350	Attendees participated in our online Lunchtime LEVinars
850	Parents and community members attended LEV trainings
1,630	Grassroots “actions” taken by LEV advocates
12,000	Readers of <i>ED ADVOCATE</i> , LEV’s monthly e-newsletter
27,500	Unique visits to the LEV website

How we're finding a way forward in 2015

We believe the pathway to providing a high-quality public education for all students begins with identifying and funding what works.

For LEV, this requires a new definition of basic education, which includes early learning, strategic investments in teacher compensation and professional learning, and at least two years of postsecondary education for each Washington student.

During 2015, LEV will continue to work with our legislative champions and partners in Olympia to achieve ample, equitable, and sustainable funding for public education. To fund the League of Education Voters' vision of an education continuum, we must overhaul how we fund public education in our state. To be successful will require us to think differently about the investment we make to support education and prepare each of our state's students for the future.



We can and must do better for Washington's students

Our work with community partners will continue to expand in eastern Washington and will also venture into Snohomish County. Our parent and community trainings across the state will identify new partners, such as early learning childcare providers, and we will work side by side with them to advocate for high-quality early learning opportunities for our youngest learners.

We look forward to working with higher education partners to identify opportunities to promote postsecondary access and completion.

With your support, we will continue to partner with parents, community members, business leaders, and educators to ensure that Washington has a high-quality public education system, from early learning through higher education.

Financial overview

Total all funds	2014	2013	2012
	(unaudited)		
Earned revenue			
Foundation & nonprofit grants	\$ 2,936,647	\$ 2,041,351	\$ 2,909,094
Individual contributions	463,047	349,121	249,572
Corporate contributions	95,350	78,164	163,137
Events, net of expenses	128,364	121,162	64,139
Other	181,145	204,750	-
Total earned revenue	\$ 3,804,553	\$ 2,794,548	\$ 3,385,942
Expenses			
Overhead	\$ 600,314	\$ 463,562	\$ 561,526
Fundraising	176,439	153,312	173,577
Direct program	1,374,170	1,310,640	2,381,516
South Shore School	971,816	994,540	974,053
Total expenses	\$ 3,122,739	\$ 2,922,054	\$ 4,090,672
Total change to reserves	\$ 681,814	\$ (127,506)	\$ (704,730)
Balance sheet			
Total assets	\$ 2,869,466	\$ 3,634,501	\$ 2,145,617
Total liabilities	627,029	2,073,876	457,486
Net assets	\$ 2,242,437	\$ 1,560,625	\$ 1,688,131
Liquidity			
Cash & investments	\$ 1,232,511	\$ 661,228	\$ 916,660
Unrestricted net assets	\$ 355,544	\$ 529,997	\$ 176,664
Board operating reserve	\$ 100,000	\$ 50,000	\$ -

About the LEV Foundation

The LEV Foundation (LEVF) is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that provides strategic, accurate, and timely information about research-driven education policies and practices to citizens, educators, policymakers, and the media.

LEVF partners with community-based organizations to educate parents and community members about how they can improve public education systems in their communities and across the state.

LEVF's programs include coalition building, grassroots organizing, training, policy research, and analysis. LEVF works to improve opportunities for every public school student in the state, and especially, students and families who are historically underserved and disproportionately affected by failing systems.

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About the League of Education Voters

Founded in 2001, the League of Education Voters (LEV) is a non-partisan 501(c)4 organization that partners with parents, students, and civic leaders to advocate for a high-quality public education system in Washington state. LEV is the only statewide organization working to improve public education from early learning through higher education and to ensure ample, equitable, and stable funding.

Working on behalf of students, LEV has successfully led the charge on many of the landmark funding and policy decisions helping to improve the education landscape in Washington.

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