



LEAGUE OF  
EDUCATION  
VOTERS™

Annual  
Report  
2016

# League of Education Voters

## CEO Chris Korsmo



Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous support in 2016! Because of you, 2016 was an incredible year for League of Education Voters and education policy in Washington. With your help, we successfully passed the Opportunity Gap Bill which builds on our previous work to change our schools' approach to discipline. Kids can only be successful in school if they're actually in school. Together, we saved our state's fledgling charter public schools – averting disruption for 1,100 kids, and creating opportunities for all future students. We also got a jump start on solving the education funding crisis we've come to call McCleary, building a robust and diverse coalition to ensure that kids who need more resources receive them.

We work hard because our students cannot wait another minute to receive the education they deserve.

Here's what we know about our students: they all have assets. Every one of them has talent. They are not widgets. They want to know that what they are learning has meaning. For all the difficulty ascribed to changing education policy, what is required is really pretty simple:

- ✓ An early start with high quality pre-school.
- ✓ Rigorous educational programs and foundational skills to help ensure kids are successful in college.
- ✓ Clear pathways from school to career, including access to information about career choices, along with the required skills and education to achieve them.
- ✓ Individualization – meeting kids where they are at and growing their ability to own and direct their learning.
- ✓ Applied learning and relevance – a chance to try on their learning and stay engaged in school.
- ✓ Adults who care about them.

It's not rocket science, but we can help create rocket scientists when we do it right – with kids in mind at every step.

Thank you for all you do to ensure that this great work continues. We couldn't do it without you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'CK' or similar initials, written in a cursive style.

Chris Korsmo, CEO

# League of Education Voters

## Board of Directors Chair Betsy Johnson

Greetings,

On behalf of League of Education Voters Board of Directors, thank you for your tremendous support in 2016!

I am honored to work alongside our fantastic staff led by CEO Chris Korsmo and my fellow board members to ensure every student in Washington receives an equitable and excellent education. With your help, we continue to transform the future of education in our state.

In support of this work, the Board of Directors focused on aligning League of Education Voters' activities around three key strategies in 2016:

1. Increase investment to accelerate achievement and close gaps, in particular as the legislature prepared to tackle education funding and the McCleary decision, building and supporting a coalition to help ensure those students who need the most support, receive it.
2. Build a highly-effective, diverse and well-compensated instructional workforce.
3. Improve post-secondary degree and certificate completion.

We are pleased to see positive gains in these key areas in Olympia and across the state, but we know there is much more to be done.

I meet people every week who voice their concerns for students, teachers and our local workforce. They want to know that the future will be better for our children. I am proud to be part of an organization that listens to and amplifies these voices, conducts in-depth research, and informs better policy to bring lasting change for our children. We are leading the charge for a better education system in Washington and are excited to have you beside us every step of the way. Thank you!



**Betsy Johnson, Board of Directors Chair**



# Our Vision and History

## Our Vision

**Our vision is that every student in Washington state has access to an excellent public education that provides the opportunity for success.**

## Our Impact

- 2000: Founders of League of Education Voters work to pass Initiative 728, which brings nearly \$500 per pupil into every school across Washington state.
- 2001: League of Education Voters was founded.
- 2007: League of Education Voters helped pass House Joint Resolution 4204, an initiative that amended the state constitution to allow a simple majority of voters to authorize local school district levies. \$7.4 billion in local school district funding would not have passed as of June 2017 without this bill. This includes maintenance and operations, transportation, and capital (predominately tech) levies.
- 2009: League of Education Voters led the advocacy to pass House Bills 2261 and 2776, which defined basic education. These are the laws on which the Washington Supreme Court's McCleary education funding decision was based.
- 2010: League of Education Voters was the lead plaintiff in the successful effort to overturn Initiative 1053, the initiative requiring two-thirds legislative approval to raise revenue or close tax loopholes.
- 2012: League of Education Voters was the key driver in passing Initiative 1240, which created Washington's charter public school system.
- 2013: League of Education Voters helped pass House Bill 1723, which expanded the state Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) and the use of the Washington Inventory of Kindergarten Readiness (WAKids) for 14,500 low-income children to attend high-quality preschool.
- 2014: League of Education Voters helped pass the REAL Hope Act (Senate Bill 6523, our state's version of the Dream Act), allowing qualified undocumented students to apply for federal student aid and participate in the State Need Grant. An additional \$5 million was apportioned for 2014-2015 to serve newly eligible Dreamers.
- 2015: League of Education Voters helped pass the Early Start Act (House Bill 1491), which increased access to high-quality ECEAP early learning for 1,600 children and dramatically increased the quality and viability of our childcare system.
- 2016: League of Education Voters helped pass Senate Bill 6194, which saved Washington's charter public schools. The new charter public school law increases accountability while still allowing flexibility and innovation to address student needs.

## Our Plan

In 2016, League of Education Voters set a compass to guide our work moving forward. We developed a new strategic plan with three high-level goals and determined three strategies to ensure that every Washington student receives a quality public education from cradle to career that prepares them for success. Every student should be prepared for stable, family-wage jobs, meaningful participation in our democracy, and contribute to the well-being of their families and community. To achieve this, we must:

- ▶ **Eliminate inequities and gaps in academic achievement by addressing racial, social, and economic disparities.**
- ▶ **Ensure that 70% of our students earn college degrees or credentials.**
- ▶ **Increase Washington state student achievement to rank in the top ten percent in the nation.**

League of Education Voters identified three key strategies to improve results for students, and we worked with partners, policymakers, and communities across the state to develop specific policy and funding approaches:

- ▶ **Increase investment while using existing funds more effectively to accelerate achievement and close gaps.**
- ▶ **Build a highly-effective, diverse and well-compensated instructional workforce that can meet each student's needs.**
- ▶ **Improve equitable access to, and supports for, degree and certificate completion.**

League of Education Voters has helped expand student access to postsecondary education through the College Bound Scholarship, the State Need Grant, and State Work Study for over 129,000 students.



## Our Strategies

### ► Increase investment while using existing funds more effectively to accelerate achievement and close gaps.

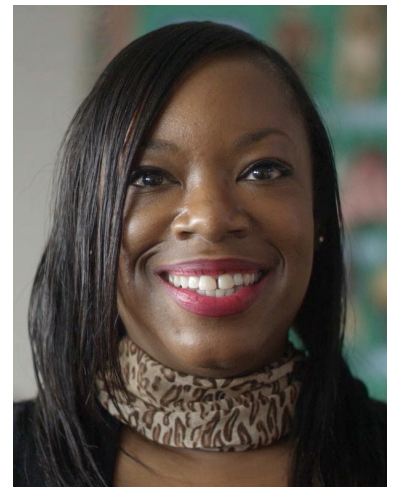
- ✓ In 2016, League of Education Voters worked in coalition to address the crisis of **inequitable school discipline**, which disproportionately affects historically underserved students at twice the annual rate of all students. Because of our efforts, Opportunity Gap House Bill 1541 passed, with a 60% majority in the House and a 78% majority in the Senate. As a result of local school district implementation, students are no longer suspended or expelled for discretionary offenses, and school staff are receiving new training to improve cultural awareness and positively support every student's development. Statewide, discipline rates have dropped measurably from 2013 levels.
- ✓ Through partnership with South Shore PK-8, we deepened our commitment to **statewide early learning**, resulting in Seattle's pioneering pre-K program, and we launched innovative **social emotional learning** programs such as RULER and the Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS), which have been replicated across our state.
- ✓ As part of a coalition, we helped secure 2017 funding for **Expanded Learning Opportunity** (ELO) programs to help historically underserved students learn outside of the traditional school day. These programs include opportunities for physical activity, reading and writing, meals, academic clubs, and STEM (science, technology, engineering and math) education. We also provided support for ELO leadership.

**What's next:** League of Education Voters organizes and chairs a coalition to work on the McCleary education funding solution that includes targeting students who need it most.

## ► Build a highly-effective, diverse and well-compensated instructional workforce that can meet each student's needs.

- ✓ In 2016, League of Education Voters helped pass Senate Bill 6455, which allocated more money to provide students in teacher prep programs **scholarships for high-need teaching positions**. Test fees for teacher candidates can now be waived, and a central data system has been created to enable districts to match teachers with available jobs in Washington. When beginning teachers arrive in schools, there is now money for **peer mentor programs** to support teacher quality and retention. New money is available to **train the classified staff** who also work with groups of students, so that they have the tools to be a part of the core teaching team.
- ✓ We convened a first-ever meeting of education professors and faculty from Whitworth University, Gonzaga University, Spokane Falls Community College, and Eastern Washington University to discuss best practices for supporting new teachers, **culturally-competent** teaching methods, and **trauma-informed instruction**.
- ✓ We deepened our partnership with the Center for Strengthening the Teaching Profession (CSTP) and developed relationships with **regional and state Teachers of the Year** to gather timely information about the conditions of teaching in schools across Washington.

**What's next:** League of Education Voters serves as a catalyst for elevating and modernizing the teaching profession by amplifying teacher voice and advocacy.



Jamilla Norris, teacher at Arbor Heights Elementary



Camille Jones, 2017 Washington State Teacher of the Year

## ► Improve equitable access to, and supports for, degree and certificate completion.

- ✓ In 2016, League of Education Voters worked with communities and partner organizations to pass Senate Bill 6194 to ensure the survival of Washington's eight **charter public schools**. 1615 students currently attend charter public schools. Charter public schools make it possible for teachers and principals to customize learning experiences to better meet the individual needs of students, many of whom come from historically underserved communities. This bill ensured that parents have more options within the public school system to find the best learning environment for their children to help prepare them for college and career. League of Education Voters received an award from the national Policy Innovators in Education (PIE) Network for this accomplishment.
- ✓ We supported Senate Bill 6601, a **new college savings plan** for families, passed as an alternative and addition to the GET program. In addition, we advocated to help pass Senate Bill 6466, which **streamlines learning accommodations** for students receiving disability services enrolled at our public higher education institutions. Student transfers will no longer have to wait for disability services, providing every student what they need to be successful, right away.
- ✓ We funded exploration work for **Career and Technical Education**, partnering with the business community and trade organizations to create recommendations for work moving forward. Career and Technical Education tailors interventions and support to increase high school graduation by showing our students career pathways and demonstrating the relevance of classroom learning.

**What's next:** League of Education Voters is advocating for full funding of the State Need Grant, expansion of postsecondary capacity, and funding that incentivizes degree and certificate completion.



## Developing an informed and engaged electorate

**A**cross Washington, League of Education Voters spotlighted the race for Superintendent of Public Instruction, hosting five **candidate forums** and providing information about other forums. Our unique events, attended by nearly 1,000 people, allowed community members to interact with candidates in small groups, where the candidates fielded questions and heard about local concerns. Community members walked away with a greater knowledge of each candidate, and became better-informed voters. The Superintendent of Public Instruction candidate forum information provided on our website was viewed over 17,800 times.

League of Education Voters launched a series of **podcast interviews** with policymakers and thought leaders across Washington. The lineup featured Governor Inslee, Superintendent of Public Instruction candidates Chris Reykdal and Erin Jones, Representative Ruth Kagi, Senator Christine Rolfes, and several Washington Teachers of the Year. We also continued our **Lunchtime LEVinar webinar series** in 2016. Topics included Expanded Learning Opportunities, The Opportunity Gap Bill: Next Steps, and the Every Student Succeeds Act: What You Need to Know. The combined podcast and LEVinar audience was comprised of more than 1,100 policymakers, advocates and influencers. We are expanding our podcast series to spotlight partner organizations and thought leaders.



## Education Advocate Spotlight: Vanessa Hernandez

The League of Education Voters is a powerful partner for change in all regions of Washington. In response to the overuse of student suspension and expulsion in Spokane Public Schools, and to eliminate disparities in rates of suspension and expulsion of students of color and students with disabilities, organizations and individuals partnered with League of Education Voters to form the Every Student Counts Alliance (ESCA).

One of the most passionate members of ESCA is Vanessa Torres Hernandez (pictured below, right). She joined ESCA when she discovered that, “The Spokane district has discipline rates that are some of the highest in the state, disproportionately applied to students of color, Native American students, and students with special needs. Making a difference in this community will impact the lives of thousands of students.”

## Teacher Spotlight: Kendra Yamamoto

At League of Education Voters, we promote excellence in the education workforce and recognize outstanding educators like Kendra Yamamoto the 2017 Educational Service District 112 Regional Teacher of the Year from the Vancouver School District. Kendra is a tireless champion for high-quality preschool for all, a belief that sits at the center of our core values. She continues to advocate for unmet needs in

her community and across the state. League of Education Voters applauds educator advocates like Kendra, and aims to amplify these voices across Washington to bring lasting change.



Left: (From left to right) 2017 Washington state Teacher of the Year, Camille Jones, with 2017 Regional Teachers of the Year, Kendra Yamamoto, and Elizabeth Loftus

Right: August 2016 Activist of the Month, Vanessa Hernandez, and her family

## Donor Spotlight: Judy Bushnell

Judy Bushnell began her education journey first as a teacher in the Lake Washington School District, then shining a light on best practices as one of the region's first instructional evaluators, and finally to transforming Bellevue schools as an elected School Board Member for more than 18 years.

Judy Bushnell knows that an exceptional teacher is an exceptional leader.

Judy has also been a passionate donor and supporter of League of Education Voters since 2003. She was first drawn to our work with the successful passing of Resolution 4204 – shifting the requirement for local levies to a simple majority vote; which has provided more than \$7 billion in school funding to date. When asked about the biggest changes supported by the our organization since that time, Judy points to

adaption of Common Core curriculum, increased support systems for schools (McCleary v. State of Washington), and more choices in school through Advanced Placement classes and public charter schools.

League of Education Voters relies on the support of generous donors like Judy, as well as local businesses and foundations to make this work possible. Thank you!



Left: Judy Bushnell

# About League of Education Voters Foundation

League of Education Voters Foundation (LEV Foundation) 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. We partner 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.

Our programs include coalition building, grassroots organizing, training, policy research, and analysis. We work 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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# League of Education Voters Foundation Financial Overview 2016

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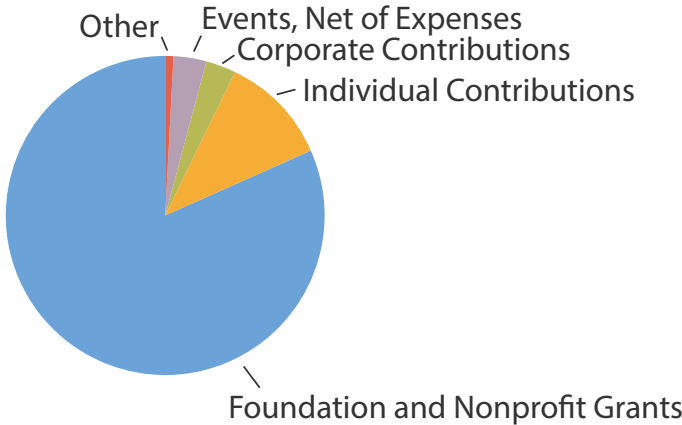
**Earned Revenue**

Foundation and Nonprofit Grants	3,174,054
Individual Contributions	435,269
Corporate Contributions	115,405
Events, Net of Expenses	140,504
Other	32,717
<b>Total Earned Revenue</b>	<b>3,897,949</b>

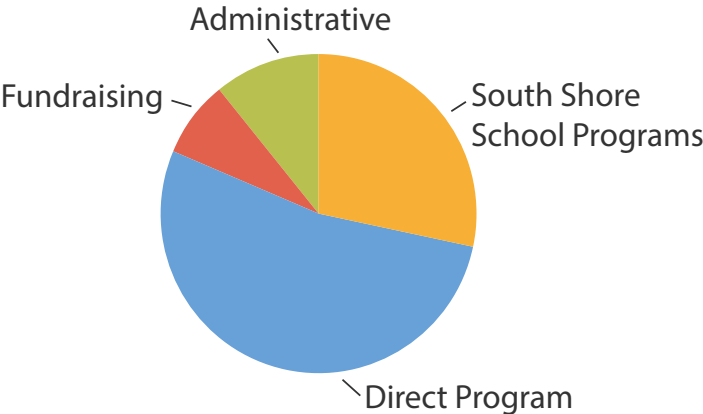
**Expenses**

Administrative	354,726
Fundraising	267,172
Direct Program	1,776,995
South Shore School Programs	952,504
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>3,351,397</b>

**Income**



**Expenses**



## About League of Education Voters

**F**ounded 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. League of Education Voters works statewide to improve public education from early learning through higher education, and to ensure ample, equitable, and stable funding.

Working on behalf of students, League of Education Voters 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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