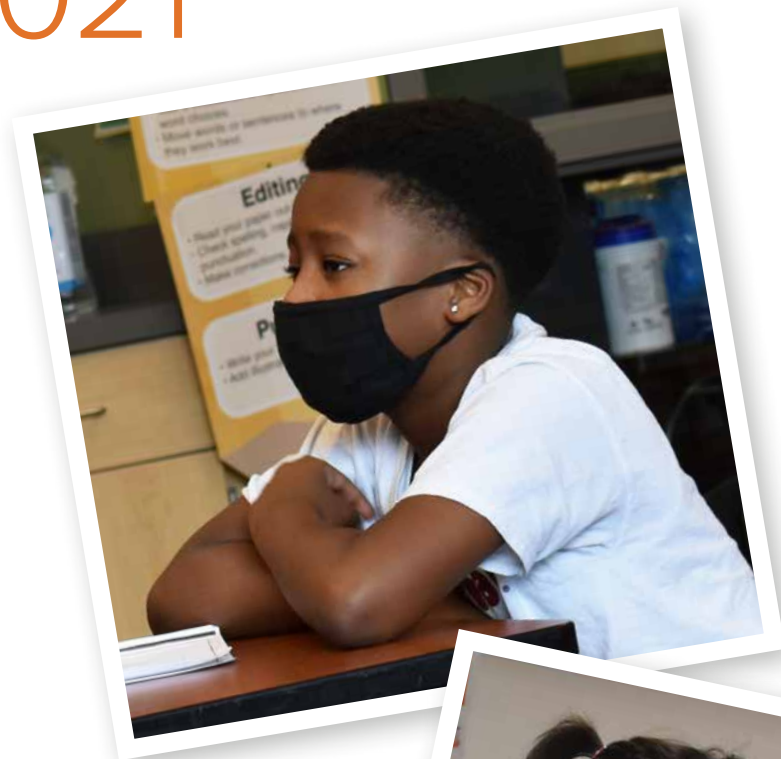


League of Education Voters Foundation Annual Report 2020-2021



Students at South Shore PreK-8



LEAGUE OF
EDUCATION
VOTERS
FOUNDATION™

Because of COVID,
white students
are one to three
months behind in
mathematics.

Students of color
are three to five
months behind
in learning.



Student at Summit Atlas Public School



Student at South Shore PreK-8

Letter from our CEO

Dear Community,

I see a lot of polls and read a lot of reports. So sometimes, as you are reading, processing, analyzing, and strategizing, it's easy to miss something profound. Especially in our virtual 2021 world. But I didn't miss this fact from a McKinsey report right before the holidays. And I still cannot stop thinking about it.

Because of COVID, white students are one to three months behind in mathematics. Students of color are three to five months behind in learning.

If you ask me why I came to League of Education Voters (LEV) 18 months ago, I would tell you that statistic tells a big part of the story. Our organization exists so that facts like the one above do not. We cannot settle for a world in which students of color experience an entirely different educational journey from their peers, whether we are in a pandemic or not. We cannot live in a world in which students with disabilities, or those living in foster care or homelessness or speaking languages other than English, experience an entirely different educational journey than their privileged peers.

But we do.

And let's not forget – it's all too easy to talk about BIPOC students based on test data and statistics. We have also seen such beauty and bravery in the BIPOC community. Kids are doing inspiring things every day – and those are the stories you don't hear about. We want to tell you those stories, too.

Following a brand new Strategic Framework, LEV is here to advocate and fight for students who are often not well-served by our education system. We do that through advocacy, policy and research, communications, and mobilizing. You will see some of our key areas of growth in our plan. For example, we are growing the Field and Engagement area of our organization to listen to and learn more from community members. And we are building up our political engagement and strategy, which has been so key to LEV's successes in the past.

It has been an honor to lead LEV for the last 18 months, a time of great change and fantastic potential. We have many challenges ahead in this extraordinary time. We will continue pushing for a better world, one in which the statistics tell a much different story.

Sincerely,



Lauri Hennessey
Chief Executive Officer
League of Education Voters Foundation
and League of Education Voters



Letter from our Board Chair

I have spent my entire career in education, as a teacher, as an administrator, and now as the executive director of Teach for America in Washington state. I was honored to be asked to become board chair at LEV at the start of 2021 and I am thrilled to work with a fantastic board of directors in this time of unprecedented challenges for our youth and their families.

This past year has been incredibly challenging for so many. Teachers have been forced to build meaningful relationships with students through a screen. Some families have no access to broadband. Parents and caregivers have had to manage a tremendous upheaval in family dynamics, navigate unprecedented health care concerns, and face the loss of loved ones. Student mental health has been significantly stressed.

We will learn more about the impacts of COVID-19 at our annual lunch event (virtual, October 7). Dr. Vin Gupta will speak about the short- and long-term impacts of COVID-19 on student health and former U.S. Education Secretary John B. King will share academic and mental health impacts on students at a national level. We hope you can join us for this free virtual event. www.educationvoters.org/events

As I look at this historic time for students, I find myself asking this: What will people say about us later, when they look back at this time in our history? Will they see that we did enough to help all kids?

At LEV, we believe there is more we can do. That is our mission.

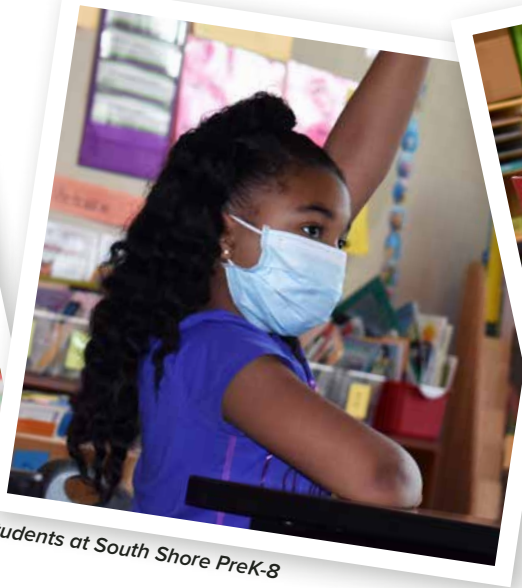
I am proud to be part of this work and hope you can join us.



Dr. Tony Byrd
Board Chair
League of Education Voters Foundation and
League of Education Voters Board of Directors



What will people
say about us later,
when they look back
at this time in history?
Will they say we
did enough to help
all kids?



Students at South Shore PreK-8

**Teaching changed almost instantly due to COVID-19.
How long will it take to revolutionize equity in
education?**

July 19, 2020 at 6:00 am | Updated July 23, 2020 at 1:19 pm

By [Hannah Furlaro](#) and [Katherine Long](#)
Seattle Times staff reporters

[View Article](#)

2021–2024 Strategic Framework

League of Education Voters (LEV) was created 20 years ago. So many things in our society have shifted dramatically in the last two decades. But LEV's commitment to putting students first has not.

Our new Strategic Framework demonstrates how students are front and center in our commitment to creating a supportive, safe, and accessible learning environment for every student in Washington state. You can also read about our dedication to listening to and learning from community, our focus on racial equity, our passion around community engagement and advocacy, and much more.

We have accomplished much in the last 20 years. Thank you for being part of the journey. We look forward to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

LEV's Unique Niche

League of Education Voters is uniquely positioned to take guidance from the perspectives of students and families all across Washington, elevate their voices, and advocate for addressing their needs and concerns. We have field organizers on both sides of the Cascades. Our communications platforms reach all corners of the state with popular LEVinars, active social media channels, and the ability to connect with and empower students, families, and educators alike. Because we have both a 501(c)(3) and 501(c)(4) tax status, we are able to work “bottom-up” to help develop community-driven policy changes, and then see those proposals through to adoption at both the legislative and administrative levels. As we work to deepen our commitment to equity and undoing systemic racism, this will be operationalized in our organizing and community outreach, our research and information sharing, and our core policy advocacy.

Values

Put Students First: Students have an important voice in shaping the education system. Families are critical partners in student success. We commit to working with students, families, and communities – especially Black, Indigenous, and students of color, students with disabilities, students gaining English proficiency, students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, and other historically marginalized students — to identify barriers and formulate solutions together, and we support them in organizing to advocate for their future.

Honor Community Knowledge and Experience: LEV recognizes that communities themselves offer the best definition of the challenges they face and often the best pathways for addressing them.

Embrace Anti-Racism: We are committed to understanding and dismantling historic and systemic racism, which creates stark inequities in education, and being held accountable for our own action or inaction. We are also committed to looking inward at LEV's history, committing to changes, and being accountable for them.

Vision

Every student in Washington state has access to an excellent public education that provides equitable opportunities for success.

Mission

League of Education Voters (LEV Foundation) acts to serve the interests of students and families across the state of Washington to improve education access and quality, particularly those who have been harmed by historical and systemic inequities, by:

- Conducting and sharing research that provides straightforward information to inform students, families, and decision-makers about public education in Washington.
- Working with communities to develop and advocate for policies that eradicate historical and systemic racial disparities and help close the opportunity gap among historically and systemically underserved students and families in Washington.

- Monitoring policies and practices closely to ensure they are implemented in a timely and equitable manner.
- Organizing and mobilizing students and families and ensuring community voices are heard by decision-makers.
- Partnering with stakeholders to advocate for an equitable, high-quality, and fully funded public education.

Long Term Intended Impact

- League of Education Voters will have helped to build a more equitable education system in Washington that puts students first. Opportunity gaps based on race or income will have been reduced or eliminated. The League will have used strong partnerships based on trust to develop solutions focused on community needs to support students and families that have been historically and systemically underserved by our education system.
- Students will feel safe and supported by educators who share their lived experiences. The League and its partners will understand and acknowledge how systemic racism has tilted the scales when it comes to education and will be motivated to dismantle those longstanding and deep-seated barriers.
- Funding for schools will be more stable and equitable.



Artwork by students at South Shore PreK-8

Three Year Benchmarks

By the end of the three-year term of this plan, LEV seeks to accomplish the following:

- Build an increased field presence and strong, trust-based relationships with historically and systematically underserved communities. Invest in community leadership through work like the Promotora model, sharing power, resources, and knowledge for community members to lead the way and drive LEV's and others' policy priorities.
- LEV's internal organizational culture better reflects our values around diversity, equity, inclusion (DEI), and anti-racism, and reflects the future K-12 student population of Washington by:
 - ▶ Utilizing anti-racist recruiting and hiring practices.
 - ▶ Retaining and supporting Staff and Board members by prioritizing a culture built on trust and authentic relationships, where diversity is welcomed and valued, and we honor the distinctions around lived vs. learned understanding of racism, white supremacy, and systemic injustice in our discussions and decision-making.
 - ▶ Continuing to provide ongoing DEI training and counseling.
 - ▶ Staying connected to partners around internal organizational DEI and anti-racism work in order to learn from one another and remain accountable.

Read the entire 2021 Strategic Framework at www.educationvoters.org/strategic-framework

“As an education policy leader who has had the opportunity to work with LEV this year, I appreciate the compassionate stance, authentic intention, and focus on leading with the community voices of those most marginalized as the organization charts its next course in Washington. Keep up the good work.”

Dr. Shirline Wilson,
Executive Director, Education Reform Now



Dr. Shirline Wilson



Students at South Shore PreK-8

Our Work

Alongside and outside of the state legislative session, LEV engages in other work that vitally supports our advocacy priorities, strengthens collaborations, and amplifies the voices of essential community members and partners.

Through our Lunchtime LEVinars, LEV hosted a number of public discussions around topics such as supporting multilingual students, advancing educator diversity, the role of K-12 schools in addressing racially-motivated violence, reimagining education, and much more, focusing especially on raising up the experiences and perspectives of BIPOC students, families, educators, and community members. Through our LEVinars, we also kept viewers informed of important legislative session bills, such as the Fair Start for Kids Act, and facilitated Q&As with legislators and state officials, such as Washington state Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal.

LEV is also a member of a number of different coalitions in Washington that work together closely on policy advocacy priorities, as well as community engagement and organizing efforts. LEV helps to lead the Investing in Student Potential (ISP) coalition, which supports students with disabilities and organizes a yearly Advocacy Day for students and families across the state. In addition, LEV is a long-time member of the Early Learning Action Alliance (ELAA), which was instrumental in passing the Fair Start for Kids Act this past session. As members of the Every Student Counts Alliance (ESCA — a group of advocates, parents, and community leaders seeking to reform school discipline in Spokane), the Youth Development Strategy Table (YDST), and conveners of the School-to-Prison Pipeline Legislative Working Table, LEV has been engaged on key issues around student supports, social-emotional and mental health, school discipline, and school culture. Most recently, LEV has been an active member of the newly-formed Black Joy Consortium for Reimagining Education, a group of grassroots and grass-tops advocates centered on the needs of Black students and families in Washington state. Offering leadership capacity over the past year, LEV helped create the policy analysis framework and community engagement framework for the group, and currently staffs and facilitates its Community Engagement Subgroup.

LEV works toward system change in a number of ways, including engaging in advocacy around the state rule-making process as state agencies update or create new administrative code to support the implementation of policies. Over the last year, this included providing feedback and suggested language to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and the Washington state Board of Education (SBE) as they engage in the process of updating the Washington Administrative Code around special education and emergency waivers to graduation requirements, respectively. We engaged in several rounds of advocacy from summer of 2020 to spring of 2021 with OSPI as they updated the administrative code around special education. Our advocacy focused on stronger verbiage concerning language access for families and the role of meaningful family engagement in the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) process to support students who access special education services.



Student at South Shore PreK-8

Legislative Priority: High Quality Early Childhood Education

After a difficult year for the children, families, and providers who make up our early learning ecosystem, the 2021 Legislative Session brought historic and substantial investments that will help build and sustain equity and opportunity for Washington's children. Child care and early learning were hit especially hard by the COVID-19 pandemic; families and providers were forced to navigate health and wellness crises, extreme financial strain, and closures in an already-fragile and under-supported industry. However, this year's legislation will do significant work to expand access and investments in early learning, utilizing an array of federal stimulus money, state funding, and potentially a new, dedicated revenue stream.

The Fair Start for Kids Act was arguably one of the most important and impactful pieces of legislation passed this session. Sponsored by Senator Claire Wilson and championed by Representative Tana Senn, Senate Bill 5237 significantly increases access to essential early learning programs like Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) by expanding family income eligibility and increasing the rates at which providers are subsidized for offering these programs.



The Fair Start for Kids Act will also bring more equity to the child care space by supplying rate enhancements to providers offering dual language programs, grants for other culturally and linguistically specific programs, grants to help address child care deserts, and strengthening services for children from prenatal to age 3. The bill will also better support providers serving children with disabilities by strengthening the use of Complex Needs Funds, and it will better meet child and family needs by resourcing trauma-informed care and expanding early childhood mental health consultation services.

The bill's long-term supports will promote greater accountability and sustain industry funding far beyond this biennium. Changes made to the Early Learning Advisory Council will allow for more parents, providers, and other representatives to oversee state decision-making, and both the Fair Start for Kids Account and the Education Legacy Trust Account will be essential new funding streams for the early learning space. In addition to carrying out the landmark investments of this bill, these accounts will help fund future goals around covering the full cost of high-quality child care and better supporting the workforce through higher compensation and more affordable health coverage.

As the Fair Start for Kids Act requires large funding investments by the state, the passage of Senator June Robinson's capital gains tax bill this session, Senate Bill 5096, is also a monumental and exciting step towards a more sustainably-funded early learning ecosystem. This bill would implement a 7% excise tax on certain long-term capital gains exceeding \$250,000, with exceptions for certain small businesses, residential properties, retirement

accounts, and more. Up to \$500 million of the revenue raised each year would be deposited in the Education Legacy Trust Account to fund education and early learning needs. While the tax may face additional challenges in its path ahead, its eventual implementation would be a significant value-add for all children across Washington.

To support our early childhood education advocacy efforts, LEV presented two webinars about the historic Fair Start for Kids Act featuring State Representative Tana Senn, Chair of the House Human Services and Early Learning Committee, and Senator Claire Wilson, Vice Chair of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee, and hosted a podcast interview with Dr. Alejandra Barraza, President of the HighScope Foundation, and Sonja Griffin, Quality Practice and Professional Development Manager for the Seattle Department of Education and Early Learning. During the 2021 session, LEV early childhood learning supporters sent nearly 15,000 emails to legislators calling out the importance of early education and family support.

Legislative Priority: Supportive and Safe Schools

Washington students bring a variety of different interests, strengths, backgrounds, and needs into their classrooms, but everyone learns best when they feel safe, included, and supported while at school. Positive learning environments and student supports – like the presence of caring and culturally responsive adults, investments in social-emotional wellness, and access to targeted resources that meet students where they are at – are essential underpinnings to a child’s ability to engage, learn, and grow. They are also instrumental factors in closing opportunity gaps and improving student outcomes. This year, young people across Washington experienced greater levels of trauma due to the ongoing public health emergency, increased social isolation, and continuous instances of racial violence in the country. During the 2021 legislative session, we advocated for greater access to whole-child, wrap-around supports for students most in need, for the expansion of school-based health centers, and for increased funding so that schools are equipped to respond to the social-emotional, mental health, and other needs students will bring into their classrooms this fall after months away due to COVID-19.

During session, the legislature made notable progress towards providing more equitable and sustainable student supports across the state. The passage of House Bill 1208 allows school districts to spend funds from the Learning Assistance Program (LAP) more flexibly and more responsively by enabling increased partnerships with community-based organizations for wrap-around supports. The legislature also passed House Bill 1225, a bill that aims to expand the reach of school-based health centers to historically underserved populations. In the budget, the legislature invested \$760,000 over the next biennium to support district implementation of a multi-tiered system of supports (MTSS), a framework that uses targeted behavioral, social-emotional, and academic services to support students. They also invested \$51.6M to increase access to guidance counseling support in high-poverty schools and \$592,000 to continue the work of the Language Access Workgroup and provide technical assistance to districts aligned with the 2020 workgroup report. Collectively, LEV supporters sent nearly 24,000 emails to legislators this session to help ensure the passage of these essential policies and investments in young people.

Through our LEVinars, podcasts, and other platforms, LEV participated in and amplified important discussions happening around student supports and school culture this session, especially as it relates to race and racism in schools (see Our Work on page 7). LEV also worked with and published guest blogs written by the Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) and students from The Root of Our Youth about the urgent need for comprehensive mental health supports in schools. Through our Field work, we convened a legislative working table centered on and interrupting the school-to-prison pipeline through session policies. We will continue to prioritize the importance of fostering safe learning environments and providing student supports as young people begin returning to classrooms this fall.

Legislative Priority: Equitable Funding Centered on Student Need

This year, the remote learning environment magnified existing inequities and inadequacies in how we resource our schools. The challenges experienced by students and families during remote learning have amplified the urgent need for a funding system that better supports under-served students, especially students of color, students with disabilities, students gaining English proficiency, and students from low-income families. An essential step of eliminating inequity in how students experience their education is creating a funding system rooted in equity.

Due to the infusion of one-time federal stimulus funding, K-12 education saw large increases in funding during the 2021 legislative session. The 2021-23 biennial budget directed billions of dollars from the December 2020 and March 2021 federal stimulus legislation to Washington K-12 schools that will be spent over the next three to four years. This infusion of funding is intended to support students and address the impacts they have experienced from school closures and remote learning over the last two school years.

The federal funding includes \$210 million directed to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), which the agency will allocate to districts and community-based organizations to support students through summer learning, after school programs, and accelerated learning opportunities. School districts will also receive more than \$2 billion in direct funding through the federal stimulus legislation that can be spent over the next two to three years.

Despite significant increases in total K-12 funding, there were only two small changes made to Washington's state education funding formulas. A small funding increase of \$25 per student was included in the budget to support the technology needs of students. The budget also provides additional resources for high-poverty schools during the 2022-23 school year in order to expand access to school counseling services.

The 2021-23 legislative session focused on the immediate needs of students and schools caused and exacerbated by the pandemic, but did not address the existing structural inequities of how we support students. LEV will continue to work towards a funding system that centers student need and provides every student what they need when they need it.

Legislative Priority: Sufficient and Equitable Resources for Special Education

Learning should be designed and provided so that all students can access their education. Our current approach to funding special education and providing special education services is not delivering the educational experience

the more than 170,000 students with disabilities need to meaningfully participate in their learning. We must both build off the progress made around creating more inclusive learning environments in recent years and make systemic changes to create the conditions for an educational system that values students with disabilities.



[View Article](#)

The 2021-23 budget included some important elements that will better help to support students with disabilities as schools look to address the impacts of the lost instructional time and mental health impacts students have encountered over the last two school years as they dealt with the pandemic. Like general education, most of the influx in funding to support special education are not permanent changes to how schools will be resourced. The following are the key changes to how the state will support students with disabilities over the next two years:

- The Washington state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will be distributing \$53 million to school districts that is specifically directed to support K-12 students with disabilities in accessing their education. This funding is in addition to the more than \$2 billion in direct-to-district federal aid that can be used by districts to help support the needs of students with Individualized Educational Programs (IEPs).
- Students with disabilities who turned twenty-one during the 2019-20 or 2020-21 school years and did not graduate with a regular diploma will still be able to access transition services if they qualify. This will help to secure continued services and supports to students who would otherwise have aged out of the K-12 system and would no longer be eligible to receive supports.
- The passage of House Bill 1295, along with a funding proviso, will help provide better supports for students with disabilities who are currently receiving education services while in juvenile justice facilities. These changes will take steps to ensure students with IEPs have their educational needs assessed and better supported, and they will also provide more staffing supports for larger facilities.
- The work of the Inclusionary Practices Project, which started in 2019, will continue into the 2021-23 biennium thanks to \$12 million allocated in the budget and will continue building the capacity of schools and districts to implement more inclusive approaches to supporting students.



Students at South Shore PreK-8

The LEV-led Investing in Student Potential (ISP) coalition held our third annual Advocacy Day virtually in February 2021 to support advocates in telling their stories to legislators and growing their understanding of their options and their rights as they navigate the IEP process. Also, LEV supporters collectively sent nearly 2,500 emails to legislators to advocate for the \$12 million Inclusionary Practices Project budget proviso.

LEV is continuing our advocacy through ISP to ensure our state's continued response to the pandemic meaningfully includes the needs of students with disabilities, especially Black, Indigenous, students of color with disabilities.

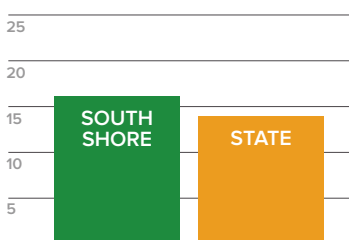


Student at South Shore PreK-8

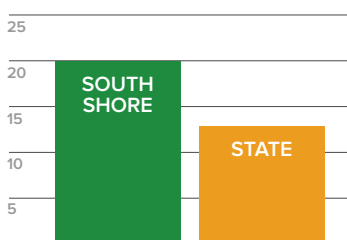
South Shore PreK-8

LEV's partnership with the Opportunities for Education Foundation (OEF) Grant and South Shore PreK-8, a Seattle Public Schools Choice school in Seattle's Rainier Valley, continued in the 2020-2021 school year. South Shore PreK-8 is one of the most diverse schools in the Seattle School District and in the state: 48% of the students are Black, 18% are Asian, 11% are two or more races, 12% are White, 10% are Hispanic, .6% are Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and .6% are Native American. One fifth of the students are English Language Learners, and 16% are students with an Individualized Educational Program (IEP).

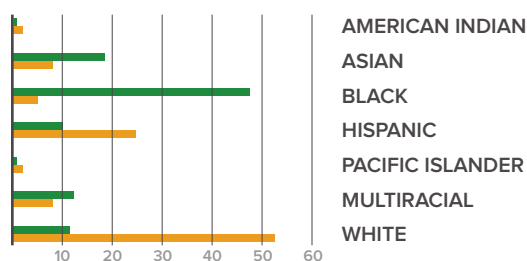
SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES



ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNERS



DEMOGRAPHIC BREAKDOWN SOUTH SHORE VS. STATE



While the school year looked remarkably different, the work to improve student learning outcomes continued.

Engagement

Student engagement was an integral part of the work completed this year. Although the daily attendance rate for South Shore students was consistently above 90% for the year, teachers and administration recognized that student engagement was low. Students may have been logging in to the remote classroom, which satisfied attendance, but weren't necessarily engaged in the work that needed to be completed. This caused South Shore teachers to recognize that the "old" way of doing things would not work in a digital/remote environment. Scheduling and remote instruction created obstacles to meaningful instruction for South Shore students in the "old" way. South Shore instructional leadership, including grant-supported literacy coaches, shifted to a model of small learning sessions for students in need, sometimes with groups of two students. With tracking, leadership saw a jump from 54% student satisfaction in November to 71% in January.

Grade-Appropriate Instruction

As all schools were struggling with operationalizing a remote learning model in the spring of 2020, a major concern was how to remediate the lost learning that occurred. South Shore, with funding from OEF, partnered with TNTP (formerly The New Teacher Project) to ensure that the focus of South Shore instruction was on grade-appropriate learning rather than playing "catch up." Instructional leadership worked with TNTP to create a system of observation and feedback which allowed coaches into the classroom to ensure that grade-appropriate instruction was being taught and students were able to move forward rather than backwards in their education.



Students at South Shore PreK-8

The leadership team saw immediate benefit from their observations, both in school culture as well as instruction:

“I am proud of the momentum gained in creating a culture that is more open to feedback; it allowed us to open up virtual and real doors into instruction.”

“Giving specific, actionable feedback and watching the teacher implement it immediately and seeing the positive impact on student engagement with grade-appropriate text was rewarding.”

“The regularity we’ve established has built the foundation for a culture shift in terms of how we experience feedback and growth.”

MTSS

A continued focus for South Shore was continuing the Multi-Tiered System of Supports even while students were working remotely. The Opportunities for Education Foundation Grant continued to support the program by providing funding for mental health and counseling services.

Student population, student attendance, student engagement, as well as student well-being was tracked through the year. The MTSS team met regularly to discuss student needs and to determine the support required to allow for student success. The Multi-Tiered System of Supports program provided students with support in:

Academics:

When it was determined that students were struggling, the team used flexible scheduling to meet in small groups with students to provide additional academic support.

Attendance:

The MTSS team looked closely at student attendance and used existing relationships with families to determine the root cause of absences. Based on family need, the school provided technical support, scheduling changes, as well as mental health counseling where needed.

Identification of Students Who Need Additional Supports:

The MTSS program allowed staff to identify students who need additional supports early on. This allowed them to develop an individualized program that met the student's needs.

Financial Support and Food Distribution

If it was determined that families were struggling financially, the school was able to offer support to pay bills. The school also developed a vibrant food distribution for families with food insecurity. The school sent food home weekly to families with a variety of volunteers from the school and the surrounding community delivering food to homes. It became so important to the community that the South Seattle Emerald published a story about the staff's efforts.



Students at South Shore PreK-8

Student Satisfaction

Towards the end of the school year, the Seattle School District conducted a survey to determine the feelings of students during this tumultuous year. The focus on student and family well-being by the South Shore staff and administration was demonstrated in the survey results. While some results were concerning, the school performed higher than similar schools in the area, if not the district as a whole.

The systems put in place by South Shore PreK-8 were able to minimize (to a certain degree) the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the student experience in school. While there is a lot of work that will need to take place in the 2021-2022 school year, South Shore will continue with the support systems put in place during this unprecedented year.

Summary*

Topic Description	Results	Comparison	
In-Person Learning	88%	86%	Southeast Seattle
		88%	Seattle Public Schools
Remote Learning	84%	80%	Southeast Seattle
		79%	Seattle Public Schools
Remote Learning: Subject Area	75%	74%	Southeast Seattle
		72%	Seattle Public Schools
Remote Learning: Technology	56%	55%	Southeast Seattle
		49%	Seattle Public Schools
School Climate & Culture	91%	88%	Southeast Seattle
Increase of 12% over the prior year		88%	Seattle Public Schools

*Results of 3rd-5th grade students surveyed



Stories from the Field

School-to-Prison Pipeline Workgroup

LEV has convened a group of experts in education, child welfare, and civil liberties to collaborate on the creation of policies and legislation that shifts us away from punitive measures in schools and focuses on the necessary investments that need to be made in student wrap-around services (including Multi-Tiered System of Supports — MTSS, mental health counselors, nurses, school psychologists, restorative justice, and social workers). The group worked collaboratively in the 2021 legislative session to support each other's legislative priorities in this pursuit. For 2022, we hope to expand the group and increase collaborative efforts to dismantle the School-to-Prison Pipeline.

Restorative Justice in Schools

Restorative Justice allows people affected by crime to communicate with the person responsible, often with the aim of a face-to-face meeting. This gives them the chance to talk about the incident. They can explain how it has impacted them, seek assurances that it won't happen again, and agree on how to put things right.

This is what many people affected by crime want, which is why 85% of victims who go through Restorative Justice are satisfied with the experience. Restorative Justice also leads to a significant drop in re-offending, as it helps people who have committed crimes to recognize the harm they have caused.

In this April 2021 virtual event moderated by Eric Holzapfel, LEV's Director of Field and Community Engagement, we discussed Restorative Justice in schools, focusing on a healing approach to student behavior versus a penal approach. Panelists Toyia Taylor, Executive Director and Founder, WeAPP; Sean Goode, Executive Director, Choose 180; Saroeum Phoung, Executive Director, Peacemaking Academy; and Dion Schell, Director of Education, Community Passageways, discussed what brought them to the work, what their programs do, their philosophy, and where they can be found. They also discussed ways to expand these programs throughout Washington state.

LEVinar Series – Listening Sessions with Voices from the Latino Community

In December 2020, Eric Holzapfel began moderating a series of Spanish language Lunchtime LEVinars featuring a statewide panel of Latino students, educators, thought leaders, and community leaders who shared their perspectives on what is working (and not working) in their communities and what the state can do to better support Latino students.

Community Engagement to Develop LEV's Legislative Priorities



The Field Team conducted 45 interviews with community members and leaders of community-based organizations throughout the state. Top priorities mentioned were run through an equity rubric, resulting in the development of LEV's 2021 legislative priorities. We circled back with interviewees to get feedback before finalization. Most mentioned community priorities:

- A shift away from punitive measures and an investment in student wrap-around services
- Implementation and requirements around Universal Design for Learning (an educational framework based on research in the learning sciences, including cognitive neuroscience, that guides educators to develop flexible learning environments and learning spaces that can accommodate individual learning differences)
- Expanded access to Pre-K

Upcoming Promotora Trainings

The COVID-19 pandemic underscores the immediate urgency to work toward creating a level playing field for vulnerable children and families.

To combat this gap, the Field Team is starting the Promotora Model – education advocacy training that is aimed at giving parents, guardians, and students across Washington state the appropriate context, knowledge, and skills to advocate for themselves or their students throughout their educational journey. This training is a result of community conversations that outlined the need for parents to ensure that their children receive access to the necessary resources. As parents learn to navigate the complex public school system and its governance, when specific issues arise they will have the tools to effectively and efficiently advocate for themselves or their child through the appropriate channels.

This training will be open to parents/guardians and students, and will have availability for educators. There will be full group sessions and breakout group sessions that will cover multilingual education, racial justice, special education, discipline in schools, and mental health. The diversity in participants will create a deeper dialogue in the listening sessions and the breakout groups. To encourage full participation and future dissemination of training topics, the participants will receive an incentive for their time and commitment to engaging more parents through training in the form of kitchen table conversations. Participants will be compensated for attending the training and providing the training in their community. This training will be offered with Spanish interpretation, and we plan to expand to other major languages spoken in Washington.

Through this experience, community-oriented training will promote constructive parent leadership and empower families to advocate for their children in educational success. Trainings will be carried out in Western, Central, and Eastern Washington.

Getting Out the Vote in Yakima and Sunnyside

In October 2020, Tri-Cities Regional Field Director Ruvine Jiménez worked with the Yakima County Leadership Coalition to Get Out the Vote in Yakima and Sunnyside. Ruvine and regional partners participated in a Get Out the Vote caravan through Yakima and Sunnyside that spotlighted voter registration sites along the route.

Spokane Future Teachers of Color Consortium

The Spokane Future Teachers of Color Consortium, led by LEV Spokane Regional Field Director Kenji Linane-Booey, expanded to over 50 current members. It is composed of both people of color and strong white allies, including in- and pre-service teachers, K-12 administrators, Spokane Public Schools Board Member Nikki Lockwood, Deans of Education and Leadership departments of Whitworth and Gonzaga Universities along with other faculty and staff, and community members.

The consortium's main goal is to recruit and retain under-represented educators of color and international educators from diverse backgrounds across the entire educational system. Goals include changing university and district-level policies, creating Future Teachers of Color Programs for 5th-12th grade and first- and second-year college students. Additionally, the consortium envisions developing mentorship and incentive programs for educators of color along with recruiting programs for immigrants and refugees into the educational industry to retain them as economically active members of our community.



Get Out the Vote event in Yakima and Sunnyside

Student Profile – Charlie Fisher, Vice Chair of the Washington state Legislative Youth Advisory Council

My name is Charlie Fisher (she/her). I am a student, friend, rower, and activist - all titles that make me feel prideful in my identity. I have lived my entire life in a small, growing farm town in Ridgefield, Washington. Growing up as being one of the only POC students in every classroom I have ever walked into, I know what it feels like to be uncomfortable in the classroom, which is crazy because the classroom is my happy place. I love going to school and am looking forward to pursuing my education in the (very) near future.

Being raised in Ridgefield has had its many advantages and disadvantages. I never saw many problems with my hometown until I got into high school. During the first month of my freshman year, I experienced racial animacy in the classroom. This was the first time someone ever blatantly called me a racial slur to my face. I felt extremely unprepared in the situation, unsure how to engage the high school and district administration. The response I received from my high school administration, “Well, Charlie, what do you want us to do about it?” still rings in my ears to this day. In the moment I was furious and confused, but I never knew that a response like that would fuel and motivate me to make change in Washington, and most importantly, Ridgefield.



The idea of starting a social justice club was the first thing that came to my mind. Along with one of my closest friends, Sejal Antal, we officially started our club, Unite Ridgefield, in 2019. At our first meeting, we had over 30 people in the classroom. We were shocked — we never knew that there were students at our school interested in raising awareness and healing our community. Unite Ridgefield has participated in a number of forms of art activism. We wrote a letter to the Ridgefield City hall to recognize Pride Month in our city, protested for Black Lives, and have led a number of conversations with teachers and students regarding critical race theory.

Unite Ridgefield eventually led me to joining other community organizations and expanding my horizon even more. I applied and was admitted to the Washington Legislative Youth Advisory Council (LYAC), the official youth voice to the Washington state Legislature. We are not only partnered with the state legislature, but also with the Washington state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). Recently, we have been officially transferred over to the Office of the Lieutenant Governor. As a queer, POC girl from a small town, I never knew a youth council like LYAC could connect me to so many other people and organizations. The opportunities I have received from LYAC have felt endless, and I am very fortunate to be a part of it.

My primary focus in LYAC is to represent the under-represented students in my own community. I have been able to take my own experiences, as well as testimony from my peers, and apply it to my work with the council. This year in particular, I dialed in on equity in education. I was able to testify and lobby for Senate Bill 5044, which makes cultural competency training mandatory for all educators in public institutions in Washington.

My advocacy for SB 5044 fostered a connection with League of Education Voters Foundation. I was able to participate in a February 2021 LEVinar alongside other educators in higher education institutions, and we had a conversation about advancing educator diversity and diversifying the classroom. I introduced a student perspective and compared my experience as a student to the educator experience. Equity in education is so important for both students and educators. Learning about civic engagement, diversity, equity, and inclusion is crucial for students and educators to learn about in order to strengthen and heal communities. I will always fight for proper representation and education in the classroom.

Educator Q&A – Amy Campbell, 2020 Washington state Teacher of the Year

Amy Campbell is the 2020 Washington state Teacher of the Year and a new League of Education Voters board member. She teaches special education at Helen Baller Elementary School in the Camas School District. We asked Amy to share her thoughts about the upcoming school year.

What should schools and districts do to address what students need as we begin the 2021-22 school year?

I think it is imperative that schools and districts continue to engage directly with families and students about their specific needs. Districts need to consider exactly what they have to offer and how they will let people know what is available to them. After everyone has endured so much, it could be easy to make assumptions about what will be helpful moving forward, when really everyone has experienced this past 18 months differently. Some people may need help with physical items – clothes, technology, food, masks – and districts can absolutely provide these things. Other people may need access to supportive personnel or access to quality information about COVID-19, vaccines, or clarification on some of the more divisive topics that are ever present in the media. Some community members will be concerned about academics and will need information on how to encourage growth with their students while others will have specific concerns regarding the social-emotional needs of their children. It is impossible to know the specific needs of a student without a conversation or meaningful engagement. We need to ensure we have clear ways for students and families to know what we can offer and a meaningful relationship so they can feel secure in reaching out with their immediate needs.

How has COVID-19 disproportionately impacted students?

There are so many ways that COVID-19, and subsequent state and local responses, have had different impacts on all students. Each student's and teacher's story is valuable in helping us understand how disproportionality is perpetuated within our systems. COVID-19 clearly highlighted the necessity of the many services our schools provide, such that closing buildings left some students without access to food, technology, shelter, safe adults, or child care, and remote learning forced many families to make hard decisions that prioritized safety and basic human needs over traditional academic engagement. Understanding that each experience was different and that students are coming back to buildings with more than just academic needs but also significant social and emotional needs can help us prepare to ensure safe, secure environments where students can re-establish community and connection, and allow us to mitigate the continued harm of the pandemic.



Amy Campbell

At this time, how can we better support students who have disabilities?

When we look back at the harm perpetuated by the pandemic, we also need to reflect on what worked well. Many students had new access to assistive technology and alternative means of learning that supported them to overcome learning differences and barriers they face across all educational environments. I would encourage district leaders, teachers, and community members to reflect on which systems and supports worked well and continue to ensure access to those things, rather than reverting to past practice and eliminating access to technologies, timelines, strategies, or instructional practice that worked well for some.

LEVinar Spotlight—The Role of K-12 Schools in Addressing Racially Motivated Violence

In April 2021, we assembled a statewide panel of students, educators, and a community organizer to discuss the impacts of racially motivated violence and how schools can best support students on a daily basis.

Our panelists included:

Yubi, a junior at Shorewood High School, Shoreline School District, and the Director of Community Outreach with the Washington state Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Lily, a junior at Mabton High School, Mabton School District, and a Second Year Councilmember with the Washington state Legislative Youth Advisory Council

Ivy, a junior at North Central High School, Spokane Public Schools, and a First-Year Councilmember with the Washington state Legislative Youth Advisory Council



Racially Motivated Violence Student Supports LEVinar

Zana, a junior at Bethel High School, Bethel School District, and a member of The Root of Our Youth

Rena, a junior at Cleveland High School, Seattle Public Schools, and a member of the NAACP Youth Council

Marlo, a freshman at the University of Washington and a member of The Root of Our Youth

Denisha Saucedo, a 6th-grade teacher at Kent Elementary School, Kent School District, and the 2018 Regional Teacher of the Year from the Puget Sound Educational Service District

Jasmine Linane-Booe, a K–8 World Languages teacher at Spokane Public Montessori, Spokane Public Schools

Tina Van, the Community Engagement Coordinator from the Hilltop Peace and Community Center in Tacoma

Highlights of the LEVinar conversation

When students are in school and the topic of racially motivated violence is brought up, how do they internalize the topic?

The students feel that conversations around racially motivated violence aren't happening enough, even though they are eager and ready to have them. Ivy, a junior at North Central High School, said that she feels "hopeful" when teachers engage in them. However, waiting to have these conversations has impacted students, including Lily, a junior at Mabton High School. She added that "internalizing racially motivated violence is difficult in a school district that doesn't necessarily acknowledge it or support you in those discussions and topics." She urges school districts to make an effort in engaging in these conversations. Adding on to Lily's idea, Yubi, a junior at Shorewood High School, said schools as a whole should work together to have these discussions in order for students to feel cared for and know their school community stands in allyship with them. Similarly, Zana, a junior at Bethel High School, would like to see teachers and administrators speak up about how to stop and prevent racism in schools rather than pushing it away and simply telling students to not bully.

Yet, there's still a lot to consider in school districts that are engaging in these conversations. Rena, a junior at Cleveland High School, suggests schools need to change the school climate for BIPOC students to feel comfortable being in school, be willing to engage in these discussions without fear of repercussions, and feel safe in a white environment.

Marlo, a freshman at the University of Washington, calls for colleges to find solutions for students to feel safe being on campus, but without increasing policing.

Do you find that students are ready for these topics in schools? Are educators ready?

All panelists agreed that students are ready. In fact, many believe these conversations should start in elementary school. Jasmine Linane-Booey, a K–8 World Languages teacher at Spokane Public Montessori, stated that starting them in elementary school would allow us to dig deeper in high school and college when students are "experiencing things in [their] own way."

Denisha Saucedo, a 6th-grade teacher at Kent Elementary School, emphasized that her students would be even more ready for these conversations if they started in elementary school. Students need a safe space to think for themselves and engage in these discussions when they're ready. However, a barrier has been teachers and parents thinking their students are too young for the conversation.

Yubi thinks having these conversations in schools would open up an opportunity for adults, leaders, teachers, and educators to learn from young people.

Tina Van, the Community Engagement Coordinator from Hilltop Peace and Community Center in Tacoma, said, "We are ready, everyone is ready. Maybe not everyone feels ready, but at what point are we asking this and wasting time asking? It feels like we're prioritizing someone's comfort over actually doing the real work."

What are the consequences of not acknowledging instances of racially motivated violence?

A major theme from the panelists was the way these conversations move to social media. Schools aren't having these discussions, "so people go to social media to share their thoughts. Some things being shared aren't completely factual. When social media is the only place that they can learn about it, a lot gets lost in translation," Yubi said. Consequently, this makes it difficult to have informed dialogue.

Lily adds that educators need to ask themselves “Am I ready to be uncomfortable?” and be willing to initiate these conversations in classrooms in order to listen to student experiences, learn from them, and learn how to be an ally.



Teachers at South Shore PreK-8

When people aren't willing to have the conversations or have the wrong information, then people don't know how to be an ally to a community. Lily finds that when a BIPOC student shares their experience, "a white student is already thinking of their response instead of what's happening – what they (the BIPOC student) have experienced." Therefore, she asks schools to invest in opportunities, resources, and support for white students in order to learn how to be an ally and "[have] a respectable and appreciative attitude towards race."

What do students want to see educators do? How can educators work with students?

Denisha believes teachers need to participate in training in order to rethink what it means to be an educator in a classroom. One crucial step for her is taking time to reflect on the impact educators have on students' lives. Similarly, Lily adds that educators need to ask themselves "Am I ready to be uncomfortable?" and be willing to initiate these conversations in classrooms in order to listen to student experiences, learn from them, and learn how to be an ally.

Rena has found that educators who are uncomfortable in these conversations "tend to call on students that fit what they're talking about" such as teachers calling on Black students when talking about Black Lives Matter. "It makes students feel like you just see them as their stereotypes — make sure that they don't feel like they have to say something, or that they have to teach the class," Rena said. In addition, she added that having these conversations in class helps students see that their teachers value what they have to say and are willing to grow.

You can watch the full LEVinar at <https://bit.ly/racialviolencesupport>



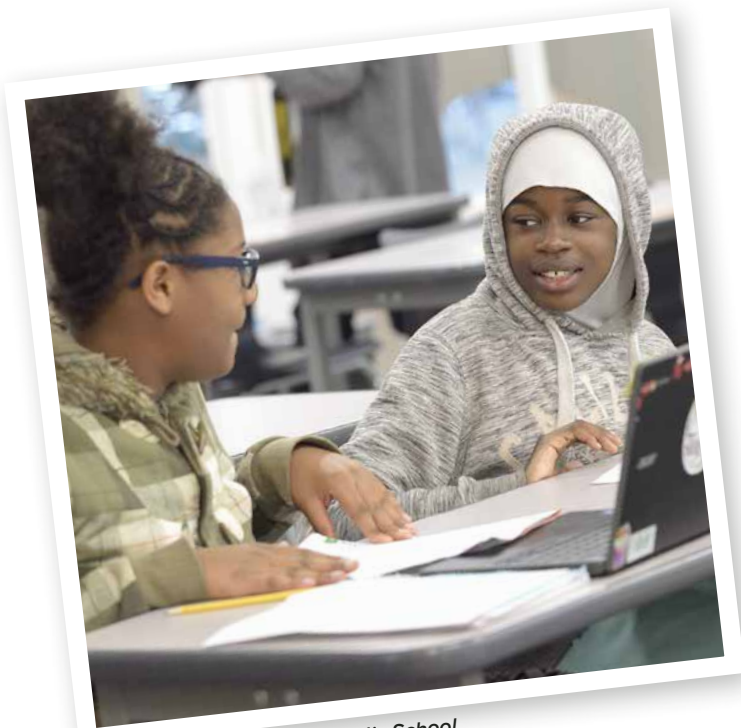
Students at South Shore PreK-8

Conclusion

Who could have guessed 18 months ago where we would be today? We have faced a global pandemic that is disproportionately impacting communities of color, while being constantly faced with new challenges as we try to respond to the needs of students and families. Our children have shown incredible fortitude and flexibility in a rapidly shifting virtual learning environment, as have teachers and parents. We have engaged in a long overdue discussion about systemic racism's effects on our schools while continuing to debate as a society the methods for teaching it.

For some, this challenging environment has battered hope. Yet we also have seen tremendous beauty. This year our Legislature created a funding mechanism that makes historic investments in early learning in our state. During this past year at LEV, we hosted discussions with inspiring young leaders, with principals and superintendents leading with innovation, with community members and nonprofits making true changes in juvenile justice, special education, and more. At LEV, we are building our Policy and Field teams to work more deeply with and learn from the communities we serve. We have added to our fantastic board with new members coming to us from Spokane, Southwest Washington, and Marysville. And we are doing our own internal work around diversity, equity, and inclusion to improve on our past work.

We have many challenges and opportunities ahead. With a strong team and a new Strategic Framework, we have the tools we need to meet those challenges and embrace those opportunities. Thank you for being part of our journey these last 20 years and as we move into the future.



Students at Summit Atlas Public School

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 support parents and community members in improving 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 systemically and historically underserved, and disproportionately affected by failing systems.

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We apologize for any errors or omissions to this list. Please contact info@educationvoters.org to make any corrections

2020 Financial Overview

Year Ended December 31, 2020

Statement of Activities

2020

Revenue

Foundation & nonprofit grants	\$	3,536,676
Corporate contributions		32,408
Individual contributions		26,186
Events and other		12,076

Total Earned Revenue **\$ 3,607,346**

Expenses

Program	\$	2,345,079
Management and general		199,178
Fundraising		128,411

Total Expenses **\$ 2,672,699**

Change in net assets **\$ 934,677**

Statement of Position

2020

Assets

Cash	\$	1,634,599
Grants receivable		1,729,041

Total Assets **\$ 3,363,640**

Liabilities 700,212

Net Assets

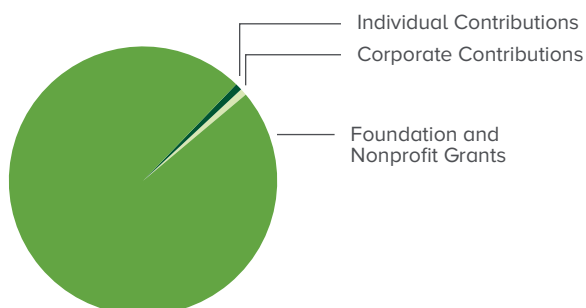
with donor restrictions 1,783,958

without donor restrictions, undesignated 479,175

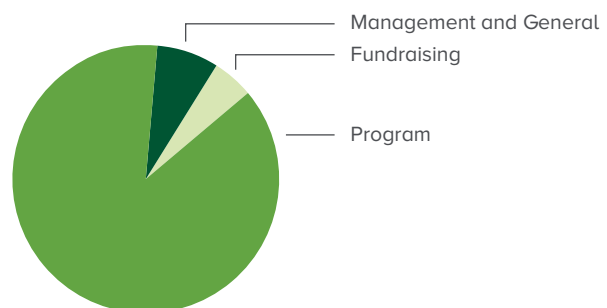
designated for operating reserve 400,295

Total Net Assets **\$ 2,663,428**

Total Liabilities and Net Assets **\$ 3,363,640**



LEV Foundation Revenue



LEV Foundation Expenses

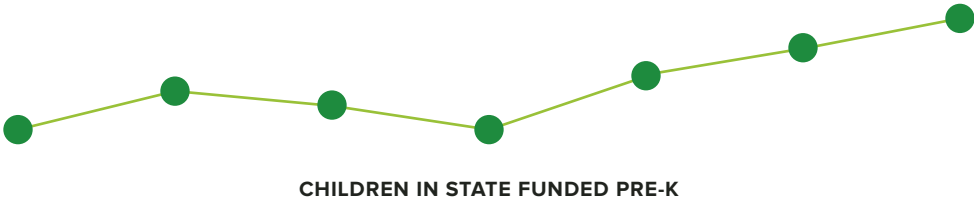
Our Impact

Founding

2001: League of Education Voters Founded

Early Childhood Education

- 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.
- 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.



- 2018+:** League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Seattle’s citywide preschool program.
- 2019:** League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Early Learning Action Alliance partners for 1,171 spots in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and a 6% state reimbursement rate increase for childcare providers.
- 2021:** League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Early Learning Action Alliance partners to pass the landmark Fair Start for Kids Act (Senate Bill 5237), which significantly increases access to essential early learning programs like Working Connections Child Care (WCCC) and the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), strengthens child care programs by expanding access to support services, and grows recruitment and retention for child care businesses.

#1491
1,600
CHILDREN

1,171
SPOTS

IN THE EARLY
CHILDHOOD
EDUCATION
& ASSISTANCE
PROGRAM

1,820

2019-2020
SEATTLE PRE-K
ENROLLMENT

K-12 Funding

- 2000:** Founders of League of Education Voters work to pass Initiative 728, which brings nearly \$500 per pupil into every school across Washington state.
- 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. More than \$12 billion in local school district funding would not have passed as of June 2021 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.

#728
\$500
PER PUPIL

#4204
\$12+
BILLION

K-12 Funding

- 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.
- 2017:** League of Education Voters led advocacy efforts through the Campaign for Student Success to drive \$8.3 billion of state money into our education system to address the Washington Supreme Court's 2012 *McCleary* ruling.
- 2019:** League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners for a state budget increase of \$63 million annually for special education in 2019-2021.



Student Supports

- 2012:** League of Education Voters was the key driver in passing Initiative 1240, which created Washington's charter public school system.
- 2016:** League of Education Voters worked with the Senate Education Chair to help pass the Opportunity Gap Bill (House Bill 1541), in which students will no longer be suspended or expelled for discretionary offenses, and better statewide data on student demographics will ensure that the system is working to keep all students on track and in school.
- 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.
- 2019:** League of Education Voters 2019 successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners for a one-time special education investment of \$25 million in professional development for educators on inclusive practices.
- 2020:** League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Multi-Tiered System of Supports [MTSS] teams in every Seattle school.



ENROLLED IN
CHARTER PUBLIC
SCHOOLS

20 AUTHORIZED
CHARTER SCHOOLS

18 OPERATING
CHARTER SCHOOLS

2 TO OPEN FALL
OF 2022

MTSS in Seattle Public Schools Year Six (2021–22) Highlights:

All 104 Seattle schools required to put Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) plans into their public-facing Continuous School Improvement Plan (CSIP) documents based on increased performance in prior years.



SCHOOLS NOW USING
THE RULER SEL
CURRICULUM IN
SEATTLE, FIRST
ADOPTED AT
SOUTH SHORE

Post-Secondary

- 2007:** League of Education Voters helped pass and protect the College Bound Scholarship to provide state financial aid to low-income students who may not consider college a possibility due to the cost.
- 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.
- 2019:** League of Education Voters worked with partners to help pass the Workforce Education Investment Act (House Bill 2158), which fully funds the State Need Grant, now renamed the Washington College Grant, in the 2020-2021 school year — meaning that every eligible student will have access to the funding they need to access postsecondary opportunities.



About League of Education Voters

Working closely with League of Education Voters Foundation, a separate advocacy arm was formed in 2001. League of Education Voters (LEV), founded in 2001, is a 501(c)(4) non-partisan organization that partners with parents, students, and civic leaders who believe in a quality education from cradle to career. LEV is a Washington-based organization working to improve public education from early learning through higher education. We shape the debate, build powerful coalitions, and grow the grassroots to achieve meaningful reform and equitable, ample resources for education. 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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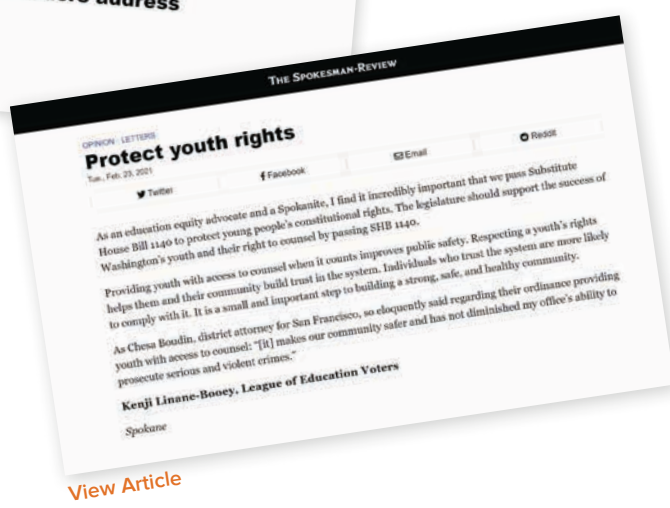
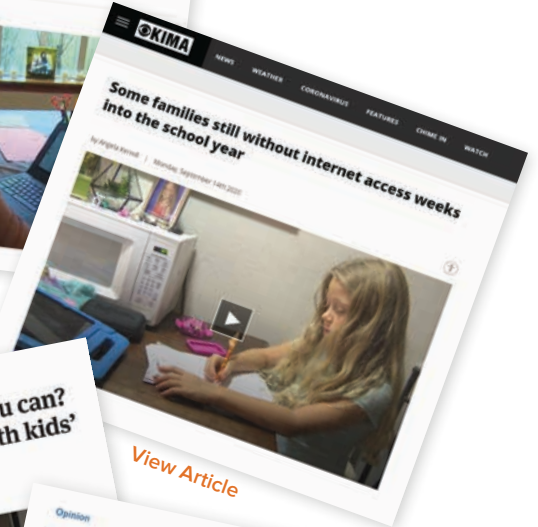
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LEV Initiatives in the News



“We have many challenges ahead in this extraordinary time. We will continue pushing for a better world, one in which the statistics tell a much different story.”

Lauri Hennessey,
Chief Executive Officer, League of Education Voters Foundation
and League of Education Voters



Student at South Shore PreK-8



Students at South Shore PreK-8



Students at Summit Atlas Public School



Student at South Shore PreK-8



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