2023 LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

LEAGUE OF **EDUCATION VOTERS**™

Students at South Shore PreK-8

Every year, we must ask: how are our students experiencing their education? The ongoing impacts of the pandemic, alongside the persisting traumas that accompany racism and injustice in our state, continue to affect students' abilities to learn and feel like a meaningful part of their community.

School should be a place where every child first and foremost feels safe, included, and that their identities and abilities are valued, supported, and affirmed. When our students are well and truly experience their education in this way, then they are better set up for success in school, in work, and in life.

League of Education Voters is committed to creating the right system conditions to make big educational changes students will experience at the school level. Together, we must do this by urgently addressing the systemic and structural barriers in Washington schools that further inequity among students and limit our ability to get every child what they need, when they need it.

In particular, we must focus on community-driven solutions to support students and families who have been historically and systemically underserved – including students of color, students living in poverty, students receiving special education services and students with disabilities, students learning English, students who identify as LGBTQ+, students experiencing homelessness, and students impacted by trauma. **Together, we can work to create the conditions for meaningful change and build better systems for the future of Washington students and families.**

The following priorities will help us respond to the impacts of the pandemic and move us toward a more equitable and just education system. »

STUDENT MENTAL HEALTH AND SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL WELLNESS

The goal:

Early learners, students, and educators have the supports they need to meet immediate mental health needs, as well as address the long-term impacts of the mental health crisis on social, emotional, and developmental wellness.

The conditions we must create to meet this goal:

- Grow the number of effective mental health professionals serving early learning and K-12 settings and ensure the workforce is reflective of the diversity of their students.

- Provide students and staff access to the mental health supports and services they need to access their education and be well. Support the responsible implementation of new funding from House Bill 1664 (2022) to ensure it creates expanded access to counselors and wellness supports, and does not work to reinforce the school-to-prison pipeline.

- Establish statewide structures that provide technical assistance, professional development, and other support to districts so they can adopt and effectively implement interventions proven to support the mental and social-emotional health of students.

SAFE AND INCLUSIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS

The goal:

Every early learning, K-12, and postsecondary classroom environment is a safe, welcoming, and inclusive space for students to learn, particularly students of color, students gaining English proficiency, students with disabilities, and other students historically marginalized from school and pushed into the school-to-prison pipeline.

The conditions we must create to meet this goal:

- Eliminate practices, like isolation, that disproportionately harm students of color and students with disabilities through trauma, exclusion, or disengagement from learning and community. Build capacity in schools through high-quality training to support the elimination of isolation as a practice in schools.

- Develop an educator workforce that better reflects the racial, cultural, and other identities of the students and families they serve.

- Resource and support diversity, equity, inclusion, and anti-racist trainings, as well as other opportunities for school staff to learn and better support all their students.

- Support educators, districts, and schools in adopting and implementing Universal Design for Learning and other inclusive practices that make learning environments more accessible and engaging to all types of learners and thinkers.

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ESTABLISHING EQUITABLE RESOURCING STRUCTURES CENTERED ON STUDENT NEEDS

The goal:

All students – and particularly students experiencing homelessness, youth in foster care, students receiving special education services, students with disabilities, students gaining English proficiency, and other historically marginalized students – have access to the holistic wrap-around, social-emotional, and academic supports they need to fully access their education.

The conditions we must create to meet this goal:

- Establish state funding structures that value and support all students, are rooted in equity, and are centered on the needs of students.

- Establish a local levy system that creates equitable access to local resources and centers the needs of students, including charter public school students.

- Provide the full resources to ensure all students have access to free meals at school.

- Allow a simple majority of voters to approve school district construction bonds.

- Support Washington's commitment to implementing and funding the Fair Start for Kids Act to ensure access to high-quality early learning opportunities for children and families.

STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES AND STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES ARE GENERAL EDUCATION STUDENTS FIRST AND MUST BE SUPPORTED AND INCLUDED

The goal:

All students have their needs accurately identified and students with disabilities have access to the resources and services needed to meaningfully access their education.

The conditions we must create to meet this goal:

- Support all schools in becoming more inclusive in culture and in practice so that all students, especially students with disabilities, are welcomed and supported.

- Include parents as partners in these shifts, and particularly in the Individualized Educational Program (IEP) process.

- Establish a funding structure that will provide all students receiving special education services and students with disabilities what they need to meaningfully access their education, including eliminating the funded enrollment cap.

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