

LETTER FROM THE CEO

Dear Friend,

As we reflect on the past year, I am filled with gratitude for the resilience, innovation, and impact that defined our work at the League of Education Voters Foundation. Now, more than ever, the work of sustained, tireless, and community-led advocacy is critical to the future of our state, our youth, and our democracy.

Despite a challenging state budget landscape and growing uncertainty surrounding the federal government's reduction of the Department of Education, together we continued to build toward an education system where every young person feels they belong.

I'm proud that this year we supported over 600 students and 50 educators directly, engaged more than 3,000 community members, and led advocacy grounded in community priorities. Our work together defended critical funding that will help dismantle problematic school discipline practices and lay the groundwork for a better future for all students.

- Public action and mobilization: We mobilized and engaged partners to defend critical funding to dismantle exclusionary discipline, and we pulled together community partners to ensure we are working together toward our shared goals.
- Policy research and awareness: Underfunded and Unsustainable, a bold report featuring insights from 28 superintendents from across the state, outlined a roadmap to transform Washington's school funding system. Through monthly LEVinars, regular briefings, and coalition convenings, we shared timely, accessible information that fueled grassroots momentum for justice-centered policy change.
- Innovating within public systems: We continued our 13-year partnership with South Shore PreK-8 in Southeast Seattle, resulting in over 100 4th and 5th grade students developing public speaking and advocacy skills through a new program with Speak With Purpose, and

we launched new work with **the University of Washington SMART Center** to elevate school-based mental health models.

Elevating youth and community voice: We expanded the
 Youth Advocacy Hub, an online site with tools and
 resources for emerging advocates, and ensured students
 and families were at the table in local and statewide policy
 decisions — testifying in hearings, shaping agendas, and
 driving reforms that reflect lived experience. Our second
 Youth Advocacy Summit brought together over 80
 students to shape the future of education.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to building a public education system that is equitable, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of every student. Thank you for standing with us, for believing in the power of education, and for helping us create a brighter future for Washington's students.

With gratitude and determination,

Arik Korman

CEO

League of Education Voters Foundation



LETTER FROM THE BOARD CHAIR

Dear Friend,

As Board Chair of the League of Education Voters Foundation, I find myself reflecting with pride on a year of meaningful progress, bold advocacy, and deepened partnerships. In a time of fiscal uncertainty and shifting federal priorities, our organization remains a steadfast champion for students, families, and educators across Washington state.

Looking ahead, I am especially excited about the work underway to develop a new **strategic plan**, which will be released before the end of 2025. Firmly rooted in our core values of equity, inclusion, and opportunity, this plan will guide our next chapter, ensuring that we remain responsive to the evolving needs of Washington's students and communities. The plan will also renew our historic commitment to supporting and cultivating legislative champions who are aligned with LEV's mission and vision.

Other work in the coming year will include research into best practices for school-based mental health supports and a broader reimagining of Washington state's public K-12 education system, along with continued work on amplifying youth voice, advocating for alternatives to exclusionary discipline, and diversifying the educator workforce.

On behalf of the Board of Directors, thank you for your continued support and partnership. Together, we are building a brighter, more just future for every student in Washington state.

With appreciation and optimism,

Dr. Marcus Pimpleton

Board Chair

League of Education Voters Foundation

This year's annual report presents an "unfiltered" look at our photoshoot at South Shore School on May 2, where we gave students and teachers an opportunity to show their stuff in front of the camera. Many thanks to **Jerry and Lois Photography**!

Design: Ross Hogin Design



MISSION, VISION, STRATEGIES, VALUES & WORK

OUR MISSION

League of Education Voters Foundation (LEV) works to create learning environments from early learning to K-12 to postsecondary where every Washington student feels safe, supported, and a positive sense of belonging, so that they can achieve academically and access the life they choose.

OUR VISION

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

OUR STRATEGIES

LEV 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:

- Developing community-informed, targeted policy solutions to benefit students impacted by racism, poverty, disability discrimination, and other forms of oppression.
- Advocating for ample, equitable, and stable resources to meet the needs of every student.
- Mobilizing families, businesses, youth, educators, communities, and other stakeholders to understand and remove the systemic barriers to each student's success within the public education system.
- Partnering with stakeholders to advocate for equitable, high-quality, and fully-funded education.
- Highlighting research-driven and promising educational practices that prepare students to reach their full potential and contribute meaningfully to our democracy and economy.

 Providing voters, stakeholders, policymakers, and the media with strategic, accurate, and timely information about public education in Washington state.

OUR VALUES

At League of Education Voters, we base our work on the following 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 who identify as LGBTQ+, 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.

Operationalize Equity

We believe equity should lie at the heart of our decisionmaking. We must employ approaches and build structures and policies externally and internally that will be designed to embed equity at every decision point.

Advocate for Educators Who Better Reflect the Students They Serve

We believe students need teachers and school leaders who reflect them, understand their lived experiences, and are equipped to help them succeed.

Pursue Collaboration

We believe we are most effective when we work across the lines of difference toward common solutions. We will learn from the community and acknowledge the power of lived experience.

Act with Courage

We will have the courage to act, to learn from our actions, and to strive to improve our practice with innovation and humility.

Remain Nonpartisan

We believe education is not a partisan issue. We are deeply engaged in the political process but do not align ourselves with any political party.



Student from South Shore PreK-8

OUR WORK

We advocate at the state level for community- driven, student-focused education solutions.

We build capacity for partners and coalitions by providing Policy, Field, and Communications expertise.

We share trusted information with students, families, communities, educators, partner organizations, policymakers, and the media.

We convene education stakeholders such as students, families, educators, community-based organizations, school district and state agency staff, and policymakers.

And we do this through an equity lens.

OUR LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

GROUNDED AND COMMITTED TO THE LONG GAME OF EDUCATION JUSTICE

mid a challenging fiscal and political landscape, this year's legislative session challenged advocates and leaders to hold the line, defend past gains, and continue to show up for students and families in the face of deep uncertainty. While this session brought few major victories, it also reaffirmed the importance of staying grounded in our values and committed to the long game of education justice.

Lawmakers began the session with a \$16 billion projected revenue shortfall over the next four years. The transition to a new governor and the broader uncertainty at the federal level only added to the complexity. With growing concern about how to fill the gap, the legislative

session was frequently defined by ongoing negotiations between the governor and legislators about whether to cut services or raise new revenue. The final budget reflected a mix of both approaches.

However, a significant bright spot emerged from this year.

Lawmakers passed new, progressive revenue measures including House Bill 2081, Senate Bill 5813, and Senate Bill 5814. These measures, taxes on our state's wealthiest, are expected to generate more than \$4 billion this biennium and another \$4 billion in the next. These investments lay critical groundwork for the future.

Amid this tough fiscal environment, early learning and postsecondary education saw nearly \$300 million in cuts and delayed investments. In contrast, K–12 education remained relatively stable. While we did not see the forward momentum we had hoped for, avoiding major cuts in this environment was itself a meaningful outcome.

Throughout the session, LEV stayed focused on advancing student-centered policies and defending essential supports. Some of our priorities made limited progress at the state policy level, but others moved forward because of coordinated, values-driven advocacy.

In a year full of unknowns, we are reminded that lasting change requires persistence, partnership, and showing up for one another.



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

CREATE EQUITABLE AND AMPLE RESOURCES FOR EDUCATION

o address the growing K-12 funding challenges,
Washington made two enhancements to basic
education funding that provided an extra \$415
million for K-12 schools over the next two years. \$335 million of
this resulted from the passage of **Senate Bill 5263**, discussed
below, to increase special education funding. The legislature
also made small increases, amounting to \$79 million, to the
amount provided for the operating costs of schools, such as
insurance, utilities, and curriculum.

A combination of permanent and temporary changes made to the local levy system will also impact how many resources districts have available. Through the passage of **House Bill 2049**, some schools will be able to raise to \$500 more per student starting in the 2026 calendar year. Districts that already have passed a levy rate equal to the maximum allowed by state law will either not be impacted by these changes or be able to increase levy funding by an amount less than \$500 per student.

The legislature also made a \$137 million temporary increase over the next two years to the Local Effort Assistance (LEA) Program. LEA provides state funding to districts that raise fewer resources through the local levy system. LEA is intended to lessen the inequality of the local levy system, not eliminate the inequity between districts.

Most K-12 grant programs administered by the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) were cut or significantly reduced. These grant programs are designed to support students experiencing homelessness, foster youth, and other historically marginalized communities, or support the development of innovative programs. This mechanism has become a way to encourage innovative practices and approaches to supporting students by demonstrating the impact these programs can have on students. Effective programs can then be used to improve how we design and resource our system to better support students.



ENNETH GRADE 2



LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

PROVIDE COMPREHENSIVE SUPPORTS FOR WELLNESS, SAFETY, AND INCLUSION AT SCHOOL

his year's legislative session showed us once again both the urgent need for systemic school-based supports and the persistent barriers to fully realizing them. LEV continued to advocate for investments and policies that create learning environments where all students feel safe, supported, and included, particularly those most impacted by trauma, disability, racism, and exclusion.

We once again supported a critical proposal to eliminate the use of isolation and significantly reduce the use of restraint in Washington schools (House Bill 1795, introduced by Representative Lisa Callan, D-5). While the bill did not pass for a third year, it maintained its momentum, and we will continue to grow legislative awareness of the harm these practices inflict, especially on students with disabilities and students who identify as BIPOC. LEV remains committed to ending these punitive practices and advancing evidence-based alternatives that de-escalate crises and foster belonging.

Encouragingly, \$4 million was secured for the **Reducing Restraint & Eliminating Isolation (RREI) Project** to support pilot sites and demonstration projects aimed at replacing these harmful practices with trauma-informed and preventative approaches. This funding was at real risk of being cut, and its preservation marks an important step toward systems change.

LEV mobilized advocates through action alerts and direct outreach to lawmakers to help secure this investment and protect the future of the RREI Project.

Student wellness and mental health also received some attention this session. Lawmakers expanded regional behavioral health grants with an \$8 million investment to serve school districts with the least access to mental health supports. These grants help build capacity for school-based care and strengthen district partnerships with community mental health providers. However, this progress was undercut by the Legislature's decision to cut \$1.3 million in funding that had supported coordination of school-based social worker associates and their supervisors. A proposal from Senator Tina Orwall (D-33) to expand social worker investments and build a more robust school mental health workforce pipeline (Senate Bill 5369) ultimately failed, representing a significant missed opportunity to bolster school-based support.

Food security, another core component of our comprehensive wellness priority, saw a meaningful win. The state allocated \$17.9 million in reimbursements for schools participating in the **Community Eligibility Provision** (CEP), which allows high-poverty schools to provide free meals to all students. This investment will reduce stigma, address hunger, and help ensure students can focus on learning, not where their next meal will come from.

Finally, LEV supported a set of non-discrimination bills designed to strengthen protections for transgender and gender-nonconforming students in schools. These measures aim to ensure every student can access an education free from harassment, bias, or marginalization based on gender identity or expression.

In the coming year, LEV will continue advocating for comprehensive, sustained, and equity-centered investments that affirm every student's right to safety, mental health, wellness, and full inclusion in school.





LEGISLATIVE PRIORITY:

SUPPORT STUDENTS RECEIVING SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES

ur education system must be designed to accommodate the needs of all learners and enable each and every student to access their education, including the more than 170,000 students receiving special education services. Washington's current approach to providing special education services leaves many students unable to truly access their education.

Our twofold approach during the 2025 legislative session was to support the continued expansion of inclusive practices and to ensure districts have the resources to provide special education services and support students' needs.

Most of the increases in K-12 funding during the 2025 Washington state legislative session were directed to special education through the passage of **Senate Bill 5263**. This made several changes to how Washington supports the special education needs of students, including:

- Increased the amount of funding districts receive to provide special education services.
- Made changes to the special education funding formula by eliminating additional funding that districts received for students who are in general education settings [Classroom settings that include students with and without an individualized educational program (IEP)] for 80% or more of the day.

- Increased funding for Early Support for Infants and Toddlers, which provides children from birth to 3 with developmental delays or disabilities to be active and successful during the early childhood years.
- Eliminated the funded enrollment cap, which limited districts to receiving state special education funding for up to 16% of students.

Another little-known, but important provision in SB 5263 was the creation of a permanent funding source for OSPI to continue the work of the **Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network** (IPTN) and to monitor and support districts in identifying when districts are disproportionately identifying students for special education services.

The elimination of the funded enrollment cap is the culmination of years of advocacy from LEV and our partners. LEV has focused on the elimination of the funded enrollment cap for the last eight years. During that time, we have seen a gradual increase in the cap, but starting in the 2025-26 school year, the funded enrollment cap will be a relic of the past. This is a step in creating a student-centered approach to funding education.



Student from South Shore PreK-8





IMPROVE POSTSECONDARY SUPPORT AND OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS

n accessible and affordable higher education system is a vital component of how we continue to support young people as they work towards realizing their postsecondary goals. The investments we make in our K-12 system will best serve our young people and communities when we work to strengthen the connection between these two parts of our education system. Our focus is not only to strengthen our higher education system, but enhancing the connection points between these two parts of our system to make sure our system centers the needs and experiences of students as they work towards accomplishing the goals they have set for themselves.

Higher education experienced significant cuts in affordability during the 2025 legislative session. More than \$50 million in combined cuts were made to both the **Washington College Grant** and the **College Bound Scholarship** program through the passage of **Senate Bill 5785**. Though SB 5785 increased some award amounts for the Washington College Grant, it reduced award amounts for apprenticeship programs and private not-for-profit institutions, as well as eliminated the bridge grants, which provided a stipend to students receiving state-based financial aid to help with the cost of books and other school-related costs.

Higher education institutions also saw funding reductions that will create further budget challenges as they work to support student persistence and graduation.

The legislature also took steps to improve how community and technical colleges, high schools, and skill centers support students in dual credit participation and credential attainment in professional and technical programs (House Bill 1273). This continues the work of an existing pilot program that has shown promising impacts for students.





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EDUCATION FUNDING REPORT:

UNDERFUNDED AND UNSUSTAINABLE

MARRIAGE STATES

n anticipation of budget shortfalls for school districts across Washington state, League of Education Voters undertook a research project during the 2023-2024 school year to better understand district budget challenges. We wanted to understand how our current resourcing approach wasn't meeting district needs, how student needs have evolved in recent years, and how districts are responding to this challenging time.

In **Underfunded and Unsustainable**, we share findings from in-depth interviews with district superintendents from 28 Washington state school districts and a look at district staffing and spending data to help inform how we can respond and ensure that students are centered as we look to how we can emerge from this challenging time with a system that is more responsive to student needs.

FINDINGS

Regardless of demographic or geographic differences, interviewees often identified many of the same financial realities and broken system components that they believe are causing challenges. The findings largely fell into the following three areas:

Staffing & Labor Market Challenges

Districts consistently reported that they struggle to manage rising staffing costs, attract qualified personnel, manage the limitations of our education funding formulas, and navigate a competitive labor market. They shared that K–12 education funding formulas don't provide the level of staffing allocations that they need, nor a salary that enables them to compete in the labor market. In addition, the state's positioning of

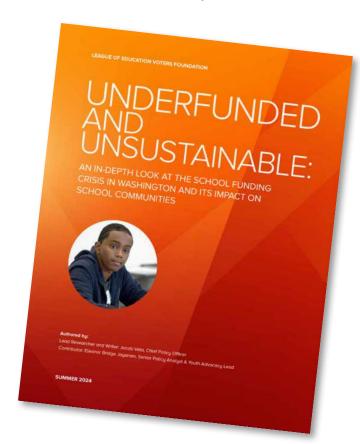
regionalization factor as the main driver for K–12 education funding creates major challenges for various districts as they try to balance financial stability and student need.

Other Funding & System Shortfalls

The complex and complicated funding formulas Washington has created to fund K–12 education have created many points of misalignment between what is provided and what districts are spending to support their students. Specifically, participants called out the level of funding the state provides for special education and school operating costs as insufficient, and they cited the overreliance on levy funding as a core component of our system that amplifies inequity because it is based on district property wealth.

Changing Roles & Needs at School

Finally, we heard that districts feel under-resourced and under-supported as they have taken on a larger role in supporting the mental health needs of students and seen their scope of work expand to support a broader range of student needs. But as districts have tried to adjust to meet these



needs, they have found there is a big gap between what the state provides and the depth of what students need.

Behavioral health support was particularly top of mind because many will no longer be able to afford key staff people, like counselors, social workers, and mental health specialists after one-time federal funding runs out. More broadly, many noted that the lack of clearly defined responsibilities districts are expected to fulfill in addressing the youth mental health crisis creates inconsistent access to student mental health support across the state.

Recommendations

In learning from these conversations and connections with districts, LEV is offering some key takeaways that encapsulate what we consider to be some critical lessons and recommendations for our state.

As a state, we need to determine what our goals, values, and expectations are for K–12 education and ensure there is alignment between these priorities and how we resource our schools.

We need to acknowledge how the role of schools has changed in our communities and formalize these changes in our state approach to resourcing and supporting schools.

The funding shortfalls districts are experiencing and the resulting reduction in behavioral and mental health support for students have the potential to grow the school-to-prison pipeline and cause more trauma among students and staff. State-level action is needed to provide districts with additional resources to prevent the harmful impact the elimination of these critical supports will have on students, especially students from historically marginalized communities.



PARTNERSHIP UPDATE

SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL

EV and the Opportunities for Education (OFE)
Foundation continued their 13-year partnership in the
2024-2025 school year to provide support to the
students at South Shore PreK-8 school in Southeast Seattle.
This partnership has allowed LEV to observe how additional supports can improve student experience in Washington schools.

South Shore is one of the most diverse schools in Washington state: **45%** of its students are Black/African American, **16%** Asian, **19%** White, **11%** Hispanic/Latinx, **10%** Two or more races. **22%** of South Shore Students are English Language Learners. **65%** qualify as low income. **21%** are students with disabilities.

South Shore experienced change this school year with the departure of its long-time principal, Justin Hendrickson. New Principal Jershon Foyston (see page 27) has served in Seattle Public Schools (SPS) for over 7 years. He was named interim principal in Fall 2024 and assumed the permanent role in Spring 2025. Prior to becoming South Shore's principal, Mr. Foyston served as an assistant principal at a local middle school. He has experience in both Special Education and Behavior Intervention. Principal Foyston is dedicated to continuing to partner with LEV and OFE to support South Shore students.

Mental health support is a continuing priority for South Shore.

Through a partnership with SPS and **Seneca Family of Agencies**, the school can offer on-site support to students in

need. A continued emphasis on Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) has also been paramount to creating a community of support and understanding. LEV has also continued its partnership with **Kids Co**. to provide childcare for families in need.

Grant funds began supporting South Shore's partnership with **Speak With Purpose** in 2024. Speak With Purpose works with students to use their voice to share their passions. In developing their public speaking skills, students also work on literacy and reading strategies. The mission of Speak With Purpose is to "Provide public speaking that empowers youth to boldly speak their truth."

South Shore has continued its commitment to eliminating isolation and reducing restraint in the classroom. Thanks to additional training and support, educators offer a nurturing environment for students to express their feelings and grow. They have developed strategies and procedures to make sure school is a safe place for all students.



SOUTH SHORE SCHOOL SUCCESS STORY

tudent J joined South Shore in November after a brief transition through another Seattle school, following a move from Las Vegas. His previous school reported behavior that was significantly disruptive and unsafe. This challenging transition was part of a much larger story — J had experienced extensive trauma while living in Las Vegas, and his family had been in a state of housing instability for several months after relocating to Seattle. His mother made the courageous decision to return to Seattle with her four children in search of stronger community support.

When J arrived at South Shore, he was placed in our extended resource program. During the initial "honeymoon" phase, J appeared to settle in well. Bright and articulate, J consistently scores in the 70th percentile or higher on the district MAP test, particularly excelling in math. He often greets adults warmly and enjoys being part of his general education classroom, where he is well-liked by many staff.

However, as the newness wore off, we began to see more clearly how deeply trauma and a lack of confidence impacted J. A common trigger for him is the belief that he isn't good at something or can't understand a new concept. In these moments, J can spiral into unsafe behaviors, including yelling, hitting, kicking, banging his head, or lashing out at peers and staff. In many school environments, this kind of behavior might have led to physical restraint or exclusion.

At South Shore, we chose a different path.

Rather than focusing solely on consequences, our team worked closely to understand J's triggers and design a proactive, compassionate support system. We recognized that while J excels in math, his perfectionism can cause significant anxiety. In response, we began providing math instruction in a quieter, less stimulating environment where concepts could be reinforced at his pace. We also introduced consistent positive reinforcement and maintained close communication with his mom to celebrate his progress—something that has become a powerful motivator for J.

To keep the classroom safe during challenging moments, we established a calm, non-reactive protocol. If needed, peers are quietly cleared from the room, and adults shift furniture to create a safe space. J is encouraged to stay in a designated area near his desk where he can work through big emotions without being restrained or reprimanded. If he bangs his head, staff quickly and calmly place something soft to protect him—ensuring safety without escalation. Most importantly, J is learning that his feelings are valid and that there are safe, structured ways to express them.

Over time, J has developed trusting relationships with his special education team and knows he has adults in his life who are rooting for him. His mom, an active and supportive partner, has also expressed gratitude for the consistency and care her son is receiving.

J's story is far from over, but his progress is undeniable. With the right support, structure, and belief in his potential, J is learning that school can be a place where he feels safe, successful, and seen.

Ensuring that all students at South Shore feel safe, successful, and seen is the goal of the partnership between South Shore, LEV, and OFE.

YOUTH ADVOCACY

YOUTH ADVOCACY SUMMIT 2024

n October 26, 2024, League of Education Voters
Foundation (LEV) and the Community Center for
Education Results (CCER) co-hosted the Youth
Advocacy Summit, themed "Student Survival Guide for
Advocacy in Uncertain Times." This annual event, held at the
Renton Pavilion Events Center, brought together 80 young
leaders, mentors, and allies to amplify youth voices and build
networks for change across Washington state.

At a time when youth are navigating a shifting landscape of policies and social issues, the Summit provided a "compass" to help them find their path, strengthen their skills, and connect with others who want to create change in their schools and communities. Young people play a vital role in pushing boundaries, challenging the status quo, and catalyzing meaningful change. Whether young advocates and their adult allies were just starting their journey or well-versed in advocacy, they left with new tools, networks, and a renewed sense of purpose. Attendees were provided with a "survival guide," which they built over the course of the day by collecting resources and notes from each of the sessions.

Our annual Summit stands out because of its collaborative design. The day was co-created by LEV, CCER, and a team of young people from across the state. We started the process by widely sharing the available student roles and invited youth to fill out our interest form. After being selected, members of the co-design team helped select session topics, schedule events, and think through logistics. Others served as event speakers or leaders, and they led workshops or even co-hosted the day's activities.

Co-design and leadership opportunities like these allow young people to shape their own experience and elevate the event's relevance to other youth. Our organizational partners also played a critical role; youth-serving organizations were invited to pitch session ideas that fit the "survival guide" theme. This open format allowed a wide range of voices and ideas to come forward and share their creativity and vision.

At the end of the co-design process, we ended up with 4 distinct sessions programmed for the day. We began with a youth panel facilitated by Eastside Pathways, featuring students who spoke passionately about their journeys getting started with advocacy. Our youth co-design team believed this was an important way to start the day because it allowed "advocacy" to feel more accessible. Some of the youth panelists were seasoned advocates with legislative experience, while others were newcomers, diving into advocacy only through events like these. They spoke candidly about the challenges they've faced in being taken seriously and the ways they've persevered to make their voices heard.

One student panelist shared that LEV's events, including this Summit and our OSPI Superintendent student-led candidate forum, were her first steps into advocacy and leadership. She credited these opportunities, and the mentorship provided by LEV, as catalysts for her growth and as important opportunities to see herself as a changemaker for the first time.

Following the panel, participants engaged in a dynamic workshop led by **Speak With Purpose** that focused on crafting compelling speeches. Participants learned how to write a powerful claim, establish a hook, and draw personal connections to their chosen advocacy topics. By the end of the session, many had developed talking points that reflected their unique perspectives on issues important to them, such as special education funding, climate justice, and fair wages. Our partners at Speak With Purpose also routinely coach students on public speaking and confidence, two skills at the foundation of advocacy and leadership.



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Afterwards, we jumped into our youth-led workshops, which for most, were the highlight of the day. One workshop, facilitated by a member of the Washington Youth Alliance, guided participants through navigating conflict and collaborating across identities. In her experience, she found great power in intersectional advocacy, citing examples like the power of uniting climate activism with tribal rights and housing justice. In another session, students and CCER staff explored the value of including youth perspectives in research projects and brainstormed ways young people could become active contributors to ongoing research around education. Another student workshop was about finding your voice and power in the Washington state legislative session, a system where you may be the sole, representative voice for your community. This student also gave attendees a practical understanding of legislative advocacy and how they can testify effectively on bills.

The importance of representation and inclusion was underscored in lunchtime remarks by 2025 Washington

State Teacher of the Year Kim Broomer, who shared her vision for schools that welcome and uplift every student. After lunch and time to network at the tabling organizations, we held our final event: a session about racial healing, led by The Root of Our Youth. This powerful session allowed students and attendees to gather in a circle to share and reflect on their identities. The focus, as preferred by youth on our co-design team, was to take time to restore, to create a safe space for open dialogue and healing, and to remind ourselves of the importance of community support in advocacy work.

The enthusiasm and collaboration demonstrated by young advocates at this year's Youth Advocacy Summit showed us the importance of convenings like these. We aspire to provide meaningful platforms for young people to showcase and practice leadership, while also finding inspiration from their

peers. Students and adults left with new skills, lasting networks, and the feeling that they are part of a broader movement of youth leadership in our state.

As one of the few dedicated youth advocacy summits in Washington, LEV is committed to sustaining this momentum and expanding these opportunities. By supporting events like the Youth Advocacy Summit, supporters enable LEV to continue this essential work. We hope to continue serving as a backbone for youth advocacy, providing the tools, resources, and convenings that empower the next generation of leaders. Together, we can ensure that youth voices are amplified and central to the future of Washington's policy landscape. Our next Summit will take place in Spokane on November 1.



YOUTH ADVOCACY

STUDENT-LED OSPI SUPERINTENDENT CANDIDATE FORUM

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n the lead-up to the 2024 primary election for Washington's Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), we saw a critical opportunity to change that. LEV partnered with the Association of Washington Student Leaders to support students in designing and leading a virtual candidate forum that would elevate youth voices and ensure candidates addressed the issues students care most about.

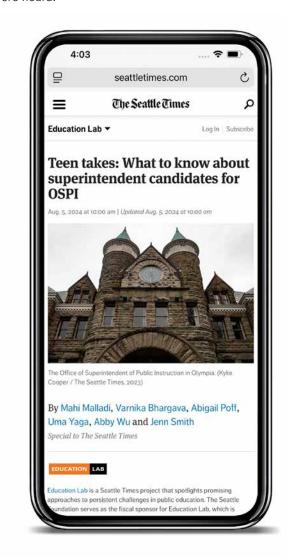
In summer 2024, six high school students from across
Washington took the lead in organizing and hosting a
live, virtual candidate forum for the state's next
Superintendent of Public Instruction. The forum featured
three candidates running to lead Washington's K–12 education
system: incumbent Chris Reykdal, Peninsula School Board
director David Olson, and former teacher and nonprofit
founder Reid Saaris. LEV and AWSL led students through a
multi-week process to develop and pose questions based on
issues they identified as most urgent to young people across
the state: school safety and gun violence, student voice and
free expression, cellphone use in classrooms, racism and
LGBTQ+ inclusion, school funding and teacher burnout, and
access to advanced courses.

In addition to moderating the event, LEV helped facilitate students in collaborating with The Seattle Times' Education Lab to publish a **follow-up opinion piece** highlighting key takeaways from each issue area and reflecting on the candidates' responses. As Overlake School senior Mahi Malladi wrote, "With the little autonomy students have, our response to multifaceted conflicts must be acknowledged. Without the ability to vote... walkouts are often the exclusive method of

demonstrating larger student discontent... Extinguishing student voice and action diminishes the role and value of youth in a world we will soon be leading."

From technical logistics and question drafting to media coordination and public speaking, students led every step of the forum process with confidence, collaboration, and purpose. Their leadership not only helped educate voters but also challenged the idea that civic participation begins at 18. This initiative is part of LEV's broader commitment to uplifting student-led advocacy and building a more representative, inclusive education system.

As Washington prepared to choose its next state superintendent, these students ensured that the people most impacted by education policy, students themselves, were heard.





STORIES FROM THE FIELD

Disrupting the School-to-Prison Pipeline Legislative Working Table (STPP)

The 2025 legislative session marked LEV's fourth year convening the STPP, a statewide coalition that discusses and advocates for social-emotional learning investments in our education system that move us away from punishment of students and instead toward restorative practices. This year we discussed, collaborated, and engaged with legislation regarding isolation and restraint practices in schools (detailed in the next section), safe and inclusive environments for students who identify as LGBTQIA+ in schools, and investments in special education.

Outcomes:

- Promoting a safe and supportive public education system
 House Bill 1296: passed both legislative chambers, signed by the Governor.
- Isolation and Restraint House Bill 1795: did not pass; funding for demonstration and technical assistance sites was included in the final budget.
- Special Education Funding Senate Bill 5263: passed both legislative chambers, signed by the Governor.

Eliminating Isolation & Reducing Restraint

Born out of the STPP, the isolation and restraint subgroup has convened the last three years to advocate for legislation that would:

- Limit the use of restraint and isolation practices in schools
- Ban the use of chemical and mechanical restraint of students

- Prohibit isolation of students in grades PreK-12
- Institute comprehensive staff and governing body training requirements on preventative behavioral supports in schools

The 2025 legislative session was a difficult session fiscally and legislatively. Due to the fiscal note of the bill, we were not able to advance it out of the House Appropriations Committee. We were able to secure a budget proviso, however, that allowed for the continuation of **demonstration sites** around the state to phase out these practices as well as technical assistance to districts looking to eliminate these practices. In one school district that received demonstration site funding, incidents of isolation and restraint decreased by 95% over a one-year period (187 incidents to 10).

Field Report

In 2024 LEV took a different approach to our Field Interviews than we had in years past. Influenced by the work and progress we have seen over the last four years, we decided to focus on the intersectionality of education by engaging community members who may not be directly connected to education, as well as engaging with teachers, parents, students, district administrators, and regional education partners.

We continued to do our best to meet community members where they are by offering meetings in both in-person and virtual formats and maintained a similar meeting process with meetings lasting anywhere from 30 minutes to an hour. The majority of our meetings were in a one-on-one format, but we did meet with a handful of smaller groups who wanted to have conversations in a group format. Meetings followed this format; ten minutes of ground setting and introductions, ten minutes to review LEV's policy platforms and positions on the respective subjects, thirty minutes to provide interactive feedback on the issue and interviewees' unique experience and expertise, and a ten-minute recap of interviewees' feedback and answers.

Participants were asked questions that focused on school funding, school safety and mental health, and advocacy and





school climate. From those questions, these themes arose from participants across the state:

- Access and Equity: We heard concerns regarding
 disparities in access to resources across all districts we
 talked to, calls for increased funding for historically
 underserved communities, and the need for more
 inclusive curriculum across the state.
- Educator Workforce and Staffing: Time and time again
 participants expressed a need for teachers and school
 staff to have increased pay and professional development,
 a concern about retention issues linked to underfunding
 and the lack of resources, and a call for expanded hiring
 of diverse educators and support staff.
- Policy and Implementation: Community members
 expressed concerns about the gap between policy
 creation and real-world implementation, the need for
 more accountability in funding allocations, and support for
 student-led policy advocacy programs.

The full report can be found on our website.

Spokane Future Educators of Color Consortium

To kick off the 2024/2025 school year, the Spokane Future Educators of Color Consortium (SFECC) hosted a community dinner at the Finch Arboretum in west Spokane. With around 40 members and their families joining we broke bread in community together and talked about our goals for the year.

Using the strength and knowledge of our Action Committee we spent many of our meetings looking for a concrete way to actualize all the work we have been doing to support current educators of color and create an environment that is ready for new educators of color to be successful. Through these hard conversations, the SFECC ended the year planning a listening project that will allow future, current, and past educators of color to tell their stories and express their needs so that the SFECC can advocate on their behalf.

The School House Voices project will launch in the fall of 2025 and will be the majority of the work of the SFECC next year.



Omar Zaragoza, LEV's New Central Washington Regional Field Director

Omar Zaragoza was born and raised in Toppenish, Washington, on the Yakama Reservation and has dedicated his professional career to education, youth development, and community empowerment. His work has spanned classrooms, community centers, and higher education, always with a focus on creating spaces where students and families can thrive.

A key highlight of Omar's work so far has been listening to community members and partners who are closest to the issues at hand. He has been actively joining coalitions, building relationships with local organizations, and conducting community field interviews to meet directly with families and youth. This community-centered approach helps ensure that the work remains grounded in the lived experiences of Central Washington residents. Omar also recently testified on proposed changes to school discipline rules by the Washington state Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), amplifying the voices and concerns of Central Washington families in education policy conversations.

Youth advocacy has been another exciting focus of Omar's work. This year, he supported students from Central Washington in participating in Washington Youth Alliance's Youth Action Day, where students met with legislators in Olympia, shared their stories, and witnessed the passage of a bill on the Senate floor. Currently, Omar is helping organize Youth Listening Sessions for school board candidates in the Yakima Valley to ensure student voices are centered in local education decision-making.



LEV IN ACTION

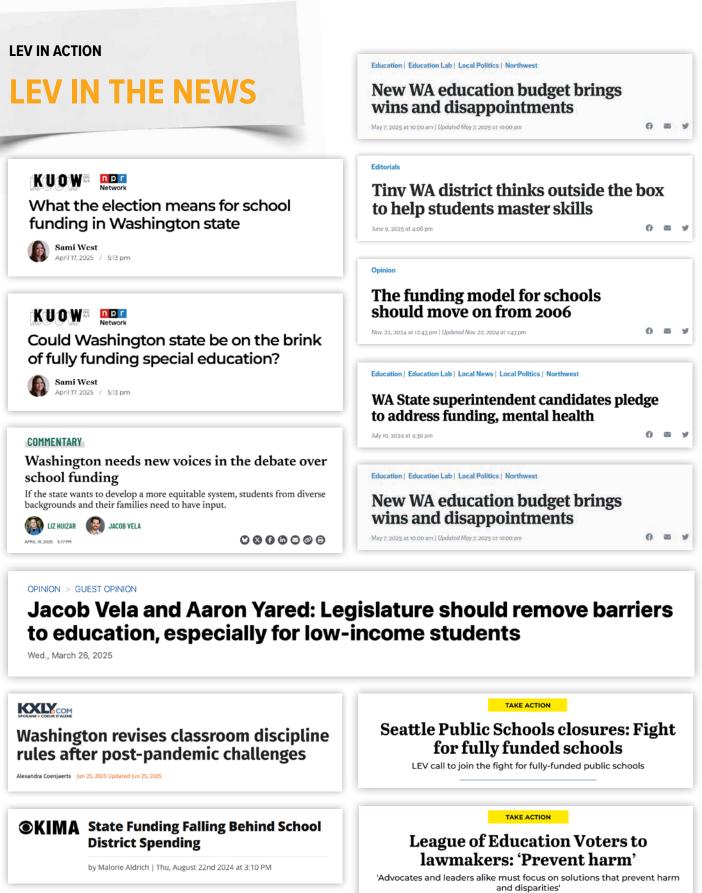
LEVINARS FOCUS ON TIMELY ISSUES

LEV hosted over 17 LEVinars between July 2024 and June 2025.

These lunchtime webinars are designed to share information and build knowledge about the issues at the core of LEV's policy priorities.

Watch recent or upcoming LEVinars
Watch previous LEVinars

JUNE 2025	MAY 2025	MAY 2025	APRIL 2025
Superintendents from Across Washington state on Best Practices, Data, and Challenges	How Washington Students Use Artificial Intelligence in the Classroom	2025 Legislative Session Recap: What Washington Students Got and Next Steps	Left to Chance: Student Outcomes in Seattle Public Schools from 1990 to 2024
WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR
APRIL 2025	APRIL 2025	MARCH 2025	MARCH 2025
Budget Priorities Across the Education Ecosystem: From Early Learning to Higher Ed	Equity in Education: From Research to Action	Washington state Teachers of the Year on Maintaining Strong and Welcoming Public Schools	Supporting LGBTQ+ Students in Schools: Advocacy and Policy Updates
WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR
FEBRUARY 2025	JANUARY 2025	JANUARY 2025	NOVEMBER 2024
How to Support Washington state's Undocumented / Mixed Status Students and Families in Schools	Leveraging ERDC Data Dashboards for Decision-Making	What to Expect in the 2025 Legislative Session	The Collaborative Process to Learn about Dual Credit in Washington state
WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR	WATCH LEVINAR
OCTOBER 2024	OCTOBER 2024	SEPTEMBER 2024	SEPTEMBER 2024
Education and Workforce Outcomes of Students Who Have Experienced Foster Care, Homelessness, or	Impacts of the 2024 Washington state Ballot Initiativs	Washington's Response to Student Mental Health	What Values and Goals Should Provide the Foundation of Our Education System?
Institutional Education			



LEV IN ACTION

IMPACT TIMELINE

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 and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and the use of the Washington Inventory of Kindergarten Readiness (WAKids) so that 14,500 more low-income children could attend highquality 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.

HB 1491 **1.600** CHILDREN

SERVED THROUGH EXPANDED ECEAP ACCESS

2015+

League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Seattle's citywide preschool program, which has prepared more than 6,300 children for kindergarten since 2015.

6,300 CHILDREN

TO BE SERVED EACH YEAR THROUGH EXPANDED SEATTLE PRE-K CAPACITY

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.

1,171 ECEAP SLOTS

ADDED TO THE PROGRAM IN 2019

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.

15.800 ECEAP SLOTS

TOTAL ECEAP SLOTS FUNDED FOR THE 2022-23

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.

\$500 PER PUPIL

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 \$14 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.

HJR 4204

\$14 BILLION

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.

2/3 APPROVAL

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.

2019-2024

League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners to increase the special education funded enrollment cap leading to an increase of the cap from 13.5% to 16% in that time.

League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners for a state budget increase of over \$180 million annually for special education in 2023-2025.

\$180M FOR SPECIAL ED

League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners for an increase of over \$150 million per year to support the special education needs of students, including the elimination of the special education funded enrollment cap.

\$150M FOR SPECIAL ED

STUDENT SUPPORTS

League of Education Voters was the key driver in passing Initiative 1240, which created Washington's charter public school

5.000+ ENROLLED

IN CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

>2x

EMPLOYMENT OF BIPOC TEACHERS IN CHARTER SCHOOLS

OPERATING CHARTER

17

50 SCHOOLS

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

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.

SB 6194 **CHARTER** SCHOOLS

SAVED CHARTER SCHOOLS



League of Education Voters 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.

League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Multi-Tiered System of Supports [MTSS] teams in every Seattle school.

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.

\$25M FOR PD

2019-2024

League of Education Voters successfully advocated with Investing in Student Potential coalition partners to support the creation and sustained funding for the Inclusive Practices Technical Assistance Network (IPTN) to provide professional development and technical assistance support for schools and educators to support inclusive practices

League of Education Voters and partners helped pass House Bill 1664, which added \$90 million in funding for staff who support the physical, social, and emotional health of students, like counselors, nurses, social workers, and more.

\$90M FOR STAFF

FUNDING FOR SUPPORT STAFF

2024

League of Education Voters and partners helped pass House Bill 1541, the Nothing About Us Without Us Act, which ensures representation of underrepresented populations who have direct lived experience with issues being explored on state workgroups, councils, task forces, etc

HB 1541 REPRESENTATION

NOTHING ABOUT US WITHOUT US ACT

League of Education Voters successfully advocated for \$4 million in continued state budget funding for the Reducing Restraint & Eliminating Isolation (RREI) Project. This initiative supports demonstration and pilot schools that implement best practices that reduce the use of restraint and eliminate isolation in classrooms.

POST-SECONDARY

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.

SB 6523 **REAL HOPE ACT**

OUR STATES VERSION OF THE DREAM ACT

2019

League of Education Voters worked with partners to help pass the Workforce Education Investment Act (House Bill 2158), which fully funded the State Need Grant, now renamed the Washington College Grant. in the 2020-2021 school year — meaning that every eligible student has access to the funding they need to access postsecondary opportunities.

HB 2158 **REAL HOPE ACT**

WASHINGTON COLLEGE GRANT

There's more impact to come, thanks to your continued support!

ABOUT LEV 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.

Corporate, Foundation, & Community Partners

Corporate/Foundation/Government gifts

3 Rivers Community Foundation

Bellwether Education Partners

Better Health Together

Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation

Black Family Foundation

BMGF Matching Gifts

Catalyst Presents LLC

City of Pasco

College Spark Washington

Community Center for Education Results

David and Cathy Habib Charitable Fund

Korman Family Trust

Marie Lamfrom Charitable Foundation

Muckleshoot Indian Tribe

Opportunities for Education Foundation

PayPal Giving Fund

Skookum Contract Services

The Norcliffe Foundation

True Measure Collaborative

Virginia Park Family Foundation

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Regional Field Director, Central Washington (2024)

Omar Zaragoza

Regional Field Director, Central Washington

Jennifer Putman

School Transformation Partner

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Accountant

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2024 FINANCIAL 9 10 11 12 13

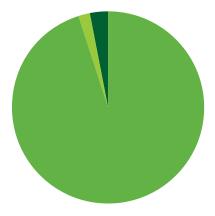
YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2024 (AUDITED)

Statement of Activities

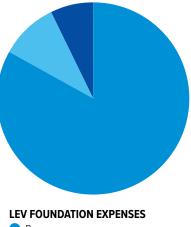
Change in Net Assets	\$ 632,302
Total Expenses	\$ 2,392,794
Fundraising	174,424
Management and General	234,422
Program	\$ 1,983,948
Expenses	
Total Earned Revenue	\$ 3,025,096
Events and Other	9,284
Individual and Corporation	57,876
Foundation and Nonprofit Grants	\$ 2,874,936
Revenue	

Statement of Position

Statement of Position	
Assets	
Cash	\$ 1,359,220
Grants Receivable	1,320,457
Other Assets	52,490
Total Assets	\$ 2,732,167
Liabilities	\$ 495,825
Net Assets	
With Donor Restriction	1,079,100
Without Restriction or Designations	1,157,242
Total Net Assets	2,236,342
Total Liabilities + Net Assets	\$ 2,732,167



■ Foundation and Nonprofit Grants
■ Individual and Corporation
■ Events and Other



ProgramManagement and GeneralFundraising

HRISTINA GRADE 4



