

2026

LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM



Students at South Shore PreK-8

League of Education Voters is committed to taking proactive steps to address the changing needs of Washington's students.

This year, schools across Washington are still facing significant financial shortfalls that put critical programs and services at risk. These challenges come at a time when schools are being asked to do more than ever: to support student mental health, address persistent inequities, and sustain inclusive, thriving learning environments, all while keeping kids on track for college and career opportunities.

The budget deficits our state is facing, in addition to the uncertainty of federal funding in the coming years, could devastate many programs and services critical to the well-being of our students.

The following priorities will help us move toward a more equitable and just education system. »

In this legislative session, we must prioritize student needs by ensuring equitable access to essential school supports, such as mental health resources, special education services, and postsecondary opportunities. Students of color, students with disabilities, students gaining English proficiency, students experiencing homelessness, and others historically marginalized by school systems face the greatest risks and bear the deepest burdens of inequities caused by funding shortfalls.

The priorities outlined below, which were informed by LEV's annual statewide Field Team interviews, represent our main areas of focus, but we also track and engage with a wide range of other education issues, which you can follow and stay updated on through our [Bill Tracker](#) (as well as our [Youth Advocacy Hub](#) for more in-depth policy resources on youth priorities). The final Field Team interview report will be available in February.

ADDRESS THE IMMEDIATE NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND COMMUNITIES

Students cannot learn when they are hungry, stressed, or unsupported. Families across Washington are experiencing the combined impact of district budget cuts, the loss of federal SNAP and nutrition supports, cuts of Medicaid, and instability in the child care sector following major funding cuts. Moreover, youth mental health continues to be a great need but not a priority amongst state leaders. These pressures fall hardest on students and communities already furthest from educational justice. Meeting basic needs is foundational to learning, and we must act now to ensure every child is fed, safe, connected, and able to thrive in school.

We support immediate steps to:

- Expand access to mental and behavioral health support by increasing school-based professionals and resources, as well as ensuring educators have the resources and consultation they need to respond to student needs.
- Promote safe, supportive learning environments by investing in prevention, trauma-informed practices, de-escalation training, and by eliminating harmful practices like isolation and significantly reducing restraint.
- Protect and strengthen school and community nutrition supports, including strategies to offset the loss of federal SNAP and school meal benefits, and ensure all students can reliably access healthy meals throughout the day.
- Mitigate disproportionate impacts of district budget cuts by ensuring schools can sustain critical services, staffing, and programming for students with the greatest needs.

PROTECT ESSENTIAL PROGRAMS AND SUPPORT PROGRESSIVE REVENUE SOLUTIONS

Washington's state budget is increasingly out of alignment with what it actually costs to educate and support students today. Needs have grown significantly, especially with changing federal policies, inflation, and cuts to essential supports, while state revenue has not kept pace. When the state budget falls behind, the result is cuts to essential programs that students and families rely on. Protecting students means ensuring the state budget is stable, sustainable, and able to meet the real needs of our education system.

We support efforts to:

- Pursue new progressive revenue options that center affordability and ensure Washington's state budget can adequately support the entire education continuum from early learning through K-12 to postsecondary.
- Ensure revenue solutions protect the whole continuum, as cuts to child care and higher education have demonstrated how vulnerable the entire education system becomes when any part is underfunded.

REDESIGN THE EDUCATION FUNDING SYSTEM TO MEET THE NEEDS OF ALL STUDENTS

Long-term, transformative change requires rebuilding Washington's education funding system around clear, shared goals and values. Today's funding structures are inconsistent, confusing, and disconnected from what students actually need to succeed. And even when we generate more revenue, our current formulas and structures are not designed to allocate resources effectively, equitably, or sustainably. We envision a coherent, aligned system that ensures every learner is fully supported and that the state's investments truly match its ambitions for students.

We support long-term efforts to:

- Define statewide goals, values, and expectations for our K-12 funding system and ensure clear alignment between those priorities and how the state allocates resources.
- Build a cohesive, aligned P-20 vision connecting early learning, K-12, postsecondary education, and the workforce to provide students a seamless, well-supported educational journey.
- Modernize and redesign Washington's school funding formulas so that the revenue we generate is used in ways that are effective, equitable, transparent, and responsive to student needs.