

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 111
THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

RESOLUTION NO. 636

2022 LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES

The Board of Directors (the “Board”) of Olympia School District No. 111, Thurston County, Washington (the “District”) identifies that the Olympia School District will face funding shortfalls in the 2022-23 school year and beyond. The shortfalls are caused, in part, by long-term structural inequitable funding mechanisms (Regionalization, Staff Mix) and underfunded state or federal requirements (Special Education, Health Care, K-3 Class Size). These shortfalls are exacerbated by enrollment declines due to the pandemic and non-reimbursable COVID related costs, such as contact tracing, substitute costs for staffing vacancies, and the purchase of health/safety protections (PPE). To address these financial realities, the Board supports necessary legislative action this session at the state level as follows:

Stabilize the Revenue Impacts of Pandemic

In the wake of school closures and the subsequent enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic, resources are needed to ensure stability for students and families. Stabilization of funding and associated staffing is needed to a) make certain that student learning and well-being are at the forefront of our recovery efforts b) reimburse districts for costs related to health mitigation and prevention measures and c) ensure reliable school staffing and transportation to and from school, for families.

Maintain stable support for enrollment and related local levy authority that has seen a reduction due to the pandemic. In the current and future years, as enrollment fluctuates in the return to a new normal, districts will not be able to reliably predict enrollment levels. The statutory requirement to make an annual commitment to staff four months prior to the start of the school year is incongruent with enrollment fluctuation due to a quickly changing pandemic outlook. Districts do not have the financial capacity to risk over-staffing schools if students do not return at expected levels, yet students are in need of an experienced ready/deployed school team.

Reimburse for public health related costs such as contact tracing and COVID screen testing, which are beyond what was originally anticipated at the beginning of the pandemic.

Revise the student transportation funding statute to fully cover the actual costs of student transportation. Under the current Pupil Transportation funding model (STARS), Olympia and many districts experience significant funding gaps. Specifically, we need to revise the state transportation funding formula to account for the actual cost of routes and allow additional types of vehicles to qualify for funding and provide more flexibility to stabilize operations. During the pandemic, staffing shortages has exacerbated the inflexibility and underfunding of the STARS system.

Closing the Opportunity Gap and Anti-Racist Training

Fund on-going anti-racist training for all school district staff, including locally funded staff. The 2020 Legislature mandated and funded racial literacy training for all certificated instructional staff. The 2019 Staffing Enrichment Workgroup recommended this training for both classified and certificated staff. Every adult in the system is responsible for ensuring racial equity and upholding the values of an antiracist organization and for advancing policies that prioritize closing the opportunity gap for persistently underserved students.

Special Education

Build on investments in the 2019-21 biennial budget and continue to work toward the elimination of underfunding. Olympia School District was underfunded by \$5.2 million in the 2020-21 school year.

State Salary Allocations

Fully fund the cost of basic education staffing, including full funding for the premium associated with a highly experienced and highly educated teacher workforce or increase levy authority commensurate with this cost.

Physical and Mental Well-Being of Students

Increase the number of counselors, social workers, psychologists, security staff and nurses that are funded in the state’s basic education prototypical school model to meet the needs of students.

Health Care

Fully fund the costs of the local impact of more employees becoming eligible for full benefits.

Equitable and Flexible Funding

Revise the regionalization model to address inequities where other school districts receive regionalization despite lower housing costs than Olympia School District.

Continue to adjust the Olympia School District’s levy authority to ensure that voters can backfill state funding shortfalls and provide adequate staffing and supports to students, and ensure that levy authority is equitable across the state.

Strengthen school safety by supporting services for and training to safeguard the social-emotional health of students and staff.

ADOPTED by the Board of Directors of Olympia School District No. 111, Thurston County, Washington, at a regular open public meeting thereof, of which due notice was given as required by law, held this 9th day of December 2021, the following Directors being present and voting in favor of the resolution.

OLYMPIA SCHOOL DISTRICT NO. 111, THURSTON COUNTY, WASHINGTON

Maria Flores, President and Director

Justin McKaughan, Vice President and Director

Darcy Huffman, Director

Hilary Seidel, Director

Scott Clifthorne, Director

Attest:

Patrick C. Murphy, Ed.D., Superintendent

Secretary to the Board of Directors