

# Legislative Priorities 2020-2021



## Board of Directors

Jerrall Haynes  
President

Michael Wiser  
Vice President

Nikki Lockwood  
Board Member

Jenny Slagle  
Board Member

Aryn Ziehnert  
Board Member

## Superintendent

Dr. Adam Swinyard  
Superintendent

Spokane Public Schools is committed to providing excellence for all students through the provision of an inclusive and equitable learning environment. We believe that legislative action is critical to the district's ability to respond to the emergent challenges of the moment, strengthen values and actions related to equity, and adequately plan for the future.

- **Maintain consistent and predictable funding support for schools to ensure an equitable student experience.** The legislature made significant investments in our schools over the past several years. We urge the legislature to protect those investments as difficult budget decisions are made over the next biennium. Education plays a critical role in building and maintaining a strong economy, supporting a well-educated workforce necessary to attract more stable and higher wage jobs; education is the “great equalizer,” providing all citizens with the tools to compete on a level playing field. The Legislature must protect K-12 funding and continue to honor its constitutional commitment.
- **Protect school district transportation.** The current funding formula does not consider the COVID-19 environment and funds schools based on metrics such as ridership numbers. We ask the legislature to maintain funding to keep our bus system viable enough to return to normal as soon as we are safety able to transport students to in person learning.
- **Invest in social emotional learning supports for students.** As our students return to classrooms many have experienced financial hardship or other emotionally impactful family situations that will require mental health or trauma informed support. Investments to equitable serve and support these needs will be critical to the health of our students.
- **Allow the school districts to find stability by not adding new policy or funding requirements.** As the state addresses the coronavirus outbreak and its economic impacts, the Legislature should avoid imposing additional mandates—funded or not—on school districts. School leaders are already overwhelmed with the implementation of an entirely new funding structure, including an overhaul of staff compensation and local funding with levies and Local Effort Assistance. The provision of equitable learning experiences for students is incumbent on stable funding and a moratorium on new expectations
- **Technology/Connectivity.** The COVID-19 outbreak, and the resultant school closures, exposed the current technology gap, including availability of devices and broadband connectivity. The Legislature must ensure there is equitable access to technology resources.
- **Early Learning Investment.** Support access to early learning opportunities by increasing and enhancing the predictability of funding and offering capital resources to expand available facility space necessary for expansion.

## Long Term Requests

After the current budget crisis is over, we ask the legislature to continue work on restoring equity in the K-12 education system by addressing these ongoing issues:

- **Staffing Allocations.** The Prototypical School Funding Model is a core, fundamental part of the education funding structure. The funding ratios for most staff positions, however, have remained the same since the Model was first implemented, resulting in outdated and unrealistic state-funded staffing levels. We have significant unfunded needs such as school nurses and mental health counselors.
- **Capital Facilities.** School facilities remain a core need and the Legislature provides a considerable investment in the School Construction Assistant Program. Grants that are provided, however, use outdated funding formulas that fail to recognize the true cost of building or educational space needs.