

 **WSSDA** Strategic
Advocacy

Washington State School Directors' Association

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Legislative Position on Tax Reform:

WSSDA shall initiate and/or support legislation to develop and implement a comprehensive, attainable, stable and sustainable funding plan for education in Washington State. WSSDA supports ongoing efforts to develop legislation for restructuring the state tax system around the principles of equity, adequacy, stability, transparency and economic vitality, in order to maintain funding for education and other essential state services, for the benefit of individuals, families and businesses.



The 2020 proposal acknowledges support for the effort of Washington's Tax Structure Work Group, providing a pathway to modernize and re-balance of the Washington state tax structure that is equitable, adequate, stable, and transparent for the people of Washington state. Efforts to discredit or dismantle the group, or cut its funding, would be a setback for bipartisan and bicameral considerations for tax reform.



Permanent Position on Simple Majority:

Bonds and levies shall require a simple majority vote for passage.



Challenges

As a result of the McCleary decisions, some districts “swapped” levy with a slightly smaller amount of state funding; there was no substantive increase of overall funding after inflation adjustments.

In some cases, a combination of enrollment declines, levy collection limits, and inflation all contributed to a ‘19-‘20 shortfall that caused the losses of all of their provisional contract teachers, many non-SpED paraeducators, and a drawback of central office staff that hampered efforts to conduct planning during the pandemic crisis.

Considerations

- Many districts experience a lack of appetite among voters for increased local levy rates.
- In more rural districts there are often no levies to begin with and voters decline any proposal.
- Some districts depend on revenue from trust land harvest.
- Funding disparities due to uneven levies create opportunity disparities for students across the state.
- Levies based on property tax exacerbate the gap between districts.
- Stable funding stream is critical before new policies are enacted.

