

2020 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

Lawmakers challenged to address many issues in short legislative session

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PRINCIPAL EVALUATION CRITERIA

Creating a Culture, Ensuring School Safety, Planning with Data, Aligning Curriculum, Improving Instruction, Managing Resources, Engaging Families and Communities, Closing the Gap

The 2020 legislative session is a short, 60-day session that will hopefully end in mid-March. It is projected to be a very modest session in terms of any new spending. According to Rep. Pat Sullivan, the House Majority Leader, the intent is to “make any budget adjustments for emergent needs.” With the passage of I-976, one of the emergent needs is the gap in transportation spending. But we also know there are still significant funding needs in our school buildings and districts related to special education, mental health support for students, and the additional health care costs related to the School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB).

We hope this session will be modest in terms of any new education policy because we know principals are overwhelmed with policy from the past 10 years and our school systems need a chance to adapt to recent changes like discipline rules and graduation requirements.

After months of conversation with principals across our state, including our AWSP Executive Board and our AWSP Advocacy Advisory Council, we completed our legislative platform (see graphic) for 2020. Our goal is to highlight the specific needs of principals and assistant principals and to continue the conversation about policy and budget needs

both immediately and into the next biennium. Since most all education policy affects the work of principals, we will be weighing in on many more issues besides those listed here.

STUDENT SUPPORT

We purposely highlighted the largest circle in this year’s platform as support for students since they rely on us each and every day. The Legislature should support the student mental health resolution passed by the State Board of Education, which includes additional training and education around mental health and an increase in psychologists, counselors, and mental health professionals. In conjunction with the Children’s Mental Health Workgroup, we also support the definition of an MTSS framework, additional positions at ESDs for school safety coordinators, and increased coordination of health centers in schools.

QUALITY WORKFORCE

In this section, we spoke to the very important progression that someone takes as they move through the principalship. We need to restore funding for the intern grant program, increase funding for principal mentors, and support state funded professional development for student academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs. Our board and council also felt that it was important

to push the Legislature to define teacher duties and expectations. We will work closely with the Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA) on this issue.

AMPLE & EQUITABLE FUNDING

In our work with OSPI’s Staffing Enrichments Workgroup, we created broad awareness and understanding that the work of principals is becoming unsustainable. We made the case the allocation for principals and assistant principals in the prototypical school model needed to be increased. In their final report, the Workgroup recommended a ratio of students to principals, assistant principals, or other school level administrators of 300:1. This would be an improvement over the current ratio which is 319:1. Over the next six years, the Workgroup recommended that the ratio move to 260:1.

Here is an excerpt from our letter to OSPI:

The data is clear and compelling. We must change the way the principal position is staffed and ensure a proper number of school leaders are hired to do the work. It has become abundantly clear we have a systems-problem being placed on the backs of individuals. Simply put, the prototypical funding model does not provide an adequate number of principals.

2020 AWSP LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

Student Support

- Support the student mental health resolution from the State Board of Education.
- Support the definition of an MTSS framework for schools, additional positions at ESDs for school safety coordination, and increased coordination of health centers in schools.

Quality Workforce

- Restore funding for administrative internships and increase funding for principal mentorships in order to support principal effectiveness and longevity.
- Provide additional state funded professional learning days, resources, and supports for student academic, behavioral, and social emotional needs.
- Provide suicide prevention and mental health training for staff and students.
- Define the minimum professional duties and expectations for teachers.

Ample & Equitable Funding

- Increase the salary allocation for principals and assistant principals in order to attract and retain high quality educators to the principalship.
- Increase the allocation of principals and assistant principals in the prototypical school funding model to support sustained leadership and provide relief from the currently unsustainable workload.
- Update the staffing allocation formula to provide additional social emotional support staff (school counselors, school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and parent involvement coordinators).

It is critical to understand that, in addition to the student-to-principal ratio, the staff-to-principal ratio has a profound effect on a principal's workload and contributes to the survey data referenced above. Likewise, categorical programs such as LAP and ELL directly influence a principal's opportunity to impact teaching and learning. Therefore, AWSP also strongly recommends the following improvements in order to provide equitable and sustained

leadership and support to all students and staff:

- *Principal FTE should increase at the same percentage-rate as staff FTE.*
- *A portion of LAP and ELL funding should be dedicated to increasing principal FTE.*

We think that being a principal is the best job in the world and we know that it is one of the most challenging,

We will continue sharing your stories with policymakers here in Olympia and around the state and hope you can make some time to do so as well. There are all kinds of ways to advocate — from sending emails to following action alerts online to calling or meeting with legislators. We urge you to get involved and to contact us if you have any questions or comments. ■

