



K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee Recommendations

WASA Superintendents:

The Washington Association of School Administrators, the Washington Association of School Business Officials, and the Washington School Personnel Association request your assistance. The [K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee](#), charged with providing recommendations on “rebasings” Washington’s new compensation system, is nearing completion of their work.

WASA/WASBO/WSPA are writing to strongly encourage you to provide your comments and input. The rebase of Washington’s education funding system, required in 2023, will be one of the most impactful actions the Legislature takes in the upcoming session. This is our first chance since the adoption of the “*McCleary Solution*” in 2017/2018 to positively update the Legislature’s complete overhaul of K–12 education financing.

The [draft recommendations](#) have been posted on OSPI’s website—along with a [Public Comment/Feedback survey](#). Survey responses are **due September 1, 2022**.

Attached is a bit of the history of how we got here, along with a list of “Key Considerations,” jointly compiled by WASA/WASBO/WSPA to assist you in responding to the survey. The Key Considerations also include a detailed explanation of the collective positions of our associations (as presented to the Advisory Committee: [WASA/WASBO/WSPA Report](#) and [WASA/WASBO/WSPA PPT](#)).

Thank you in advance for your assistance.

Sincerely,

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Background of the K-12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee

In 2012, the Supreme Court ruled in favor of the plaintiffs (school districts) in the “*McCleary v. Washington*” education funding case. In its landmark decision, the Court ruled the state was failing to provide ample funding of its constitutional “paramount duty” and, in addition, was forcing an unconstitutional overreliance on school district levies. The Court ordered the state to comply with the constitutional mandate to provide ample funding for basic education by 2018.

In anticipation of the Court’s ruling, the Legislature had been laying the groundwork for a new education funding system with the adoption of [ESHB 2261](#) (2009) and [SHB 2776](#) (2010). These two bills were the roadmap to an updated definition of basic education, along with the necessary new education finance system to ensure implementation. Following the Court’s 2012 ruling, the Legislature began the arduous journey to revise Washington’s system of financing schools to comply with the state’s constitutional mandate. Using the framework that ESHB 2261 and SHB 2276 had provided, the Legislature (following many fits and starts) eventually adopted [EHB 2242](#) (the so-called “McCleary solution”) in 2017 along with necessary updates in 2018 via [E2SSB 6362](#).

The four education funding bills completely overhauled Washington’s education funding system. Major changes included: an updated definition of basic education; a new model for allocating funds to schools (Prototypical School Funding Model); a new scheme for providing salary allocations to education staff, including a process to increase allocations for certain districts (regionalization and experience factors); a major revision and calculation for Local Effort Assistance and local levies (along with a reduction in levy lids); and a change to inflationary factors.

Understanding the education system would evolve over time, legislators adopted provisions in EHB 2242 requiring a regular review and “rebase” of funding. Specifically, [RCW 28A.150.412\(1\)](#) states:

Beginning with the 2023 regular legislative session, and every four years thereafter, the Legislature shall review and rebase state basic education compensation allocations compared to school district compensation data, regionalization factors, what inflationary measure is the most representative of actual market experience for school districts, and other economic information. The Legislature shall revise the minimum allocations, regionalization factors, and inflationary measure if necessary to ensure that state basic education allocations continue to provide market-rate salaries and that regionalization adjustments reflect actual economic differences between school districts.

In 2021, the Legislature adopted a proviso in the 2021-23 Operating Budget ([ESSB 5092](#)) establishing a K-12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee that is charged with providing recommendations for the required rebase in 2023. The budget proviso also expanded the requirement to review the funding system. The recommendations must include the issues stated above, but the Advisory Committee must also develop recommendations that support “recruiting and retaining a multicultural and multilingual educator workforce.”

The Advisory Committee has been meeting since last November and recently adopted a set of draft recommendations. Now, the Advisory Committee is seeking input before the recommendations are forwarded to Superintendent Reykdal for his final review and approval.



WASA/WASBO/WSPA Key Considerations

As part of the process of developing “rebasings” recommendations, the K-12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee solicited “ideas, thoughts, and proposals” to assist their thinking. WASA/WASBO/WSPA jointly provided a series of suggestions and recommendations for the Advisory Committee’s consideration. We provided a [written report](#) in April, followed by an [oral presentation](#) in May.

We strongly encourage you to provide your own [comments and input](#) by the September 1, 2022 deadline. The following Key Considerations—based upon the collective positions of our associations, as presented to the Advisory Committee—are intended to assist you in responding to the draft recommendations. Our hope is these Key Considerations will guide you in responding, without the need to conduct your own research on the [Advisory Committee’s draft recommendations](#).

❖ COMPENSATION UPDATES TO K-12 BASIC EDUCATION SALARIES

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA Position: Comprehensive updates to the Prototypical School Funding Model are necessary. Both enhancements to unrealistic staffing ratios and increased support for additional positions are essential.**

While not specifically addressed in the charge to the Advisory Committee, adopting more realistic staffing allocations in the Model is strongly linked with the need to adjust/rebase the compensation system. Eliminating the deficiencies in the current ratios will free up local levy resources to be used as intended by districts’ constituents.

In addition to enhanced allocations, other meaningful updates to the Model are necessary, including:

- Increased allocations for CTE and lab science positions
- Recognition of mental health therapists
- Increased support for technology personnel
- Recognition of: classified staffing for paraeducators; higher custodial/trades salaries; classified administrative positions; classified substitutes
- Increased support for certificated substitutes
- Increased support for School Employee Benefit Board (SEBB) costs

Advisory Committee recommendations are mostly consistent with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee recommends the [2019 Staffing Enrichment Workgroup](#) recommended staffing levels in the Prototypical School Funding Model be fully implemented, while also recommending increased funding for substitutes and special education staff (*Recommendation No. 7*).

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA Position: Comparable wage work models need to be updated to recognize benefits beyond base salaries, as current flexible models (including remote-work and flexible schedules) may be more attractive than the current K-12 work model, which usually includes living near work sites.**

An analysis needs to be completed to address staffing shortages to determine if compensation is the main consideration for recruiting and retaining staff.

Advisory Committee recommendations do not follow WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

Proposed salary allocations are based on “comparable job classifications” using data from the Employment Security Department (*Recommendation No. 1*). In many cases, those “comparable” positions are apples-to-oranges comparisons. For example, a “training manager” for a private company may have comparable education requirements, skills, and knowledge as a certificated teacher; however, teaching English to a class of 27 seventh-graders is likely not comparable to providing training to professional staff in the private sector.

Additionally, the “raw” data from Employment Security is used to draw comparisons without any specific analysis of whether current compensation is adequate to recruit/retain staff.

Finally, the Employment Security data that was used to build the recommendation is not available in the report provided by the Advisory Committee. Including this data in an appendix to the report would allow the public, educators, and legislators understand how the recommended values were derived.

❖ **UPDATES TO REGIONALIZATION DATA**

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA Position: Regionalization needs to be based on a wider geographic area and/or be aligned with the labor market—including beyond state boundaries for border districts. Regionalization calculations need to be more transparent and regionalization data needs be current. An appeals process should be implemented when applying regionalization factors.**

Advisory Committee recommendations are largely consistent with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee recommends using salary levels in metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics—in other words, regionalization is aligned with the labor market (*Recommendation No. 2*), rather than housing prices as in the current model. While consistent with the underlying WASA/WASBO/WSPA position, the labor market is NOT extended beyond state boundaries for border districts. The labor market for districts in Southwest Washington extends beyond the border into Portland, yet the Advisory Committee recommendations provide no recognition of this reality.

WASA/WASBO/WSPA also recommended that regionalization calculations be more transparent, using current data. Like comparable salary data from the Employment Security Department in the previous recommendation, this report fails to include any information provided by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, which was used to develop this recommendation.

The Advisory Committee report notes that “No district should experience a funding reduction for state funded salaries in any year during the transition to these new regionalization factors.” This is positive statement; however, WASA/WASBO/WSPA encouraged the Advisory Committee to explicitly reiterate [RCW 28A.150.412\(4\)](#), which states: “No district may receive less state funding for the minimum state salary allocation as compared to its prior school year salary allocation as a result of adjustments that reflect updated regionalized salaries.” The two statements are substantially similar; however, by including language from current law, this provision would not be mistaken for an Advisory Committee recommendation that can be ignored. Instead, it would be a strong reminder to legislators that this is a statutory mandate.

Finally, WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommended a robust appeals process be established, yet the regionalization factors the Advisory Committee recommends to be applied would be fixed, with no opportunity for a district to argue its regionalization factor is inappropriate and should be adjusted.

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA position:** There are additional considerations in mitigating boundary effects of regionalization policies. We recommended: the addition of a rural incentive and/or an increase in the Remote and Necessary formula to assist very small school districts; and the provision of housing allowances or commuting allowances for rural districts that might not have housing available.

Advisory Committee recommendations are largely consistent with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee recommends a grant program be established that provides funding to rural, remote school districts that can demonstrate and provide evidence that local housing shortages have impacted their ability to attract and retain staff (*Recommendation No. 12*).

❖ UPDATES TO EXPERIENCE FACTORS

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA Position:** We argued: the experience factor should be adjusted annually, or at the least, biennially; districts should be eligible for an experience factor if they have above average staff experience OR (rather than the current 'AND') above average staff education; and a slow "step-down" should be implemented for districts that lose eligibility for the experience factor. Our recommendation is to implement the policy contained in HB 1419, introduced (but not adopted) in 2021.

Advisory Committee recommendations are consistent with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee agrees the policy contained in [HB 1419](#) (2021 session) is the most appropriate solution to address adjustments in the experience factor (*Recommendation No. 4*).

The Advisory Committee also recommends the state begin collecting data on paraeducator degrees, certification, and experience to determine how the state could provide a similar experience factor for paraeducators.

❖ ADJUSTMENTS TO INFLATIONARY FACTORS

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA position:** The Legislature should move from the current inflationary factor (Implicit Price Deflator or IPD) back to the Consumer Price Index (CPI), as adopted by the voters in Initiative 732 (2000). Additionally, whether IPD or CPI is the inflationary factor, the law needs to be clarified the inflationary factor is determined by the "previous calendar year's annual average" inflation index.

Advisory Committee recommendations are consistent with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee recommends state salary allocations be adjusted annually each September 1, using the Seattle-area CPI for the most recent 12-month period ending prior to the last Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council Quarterly report, issued in February (*Recommendation No. 3*). This allows the Legislature to use the latest available data in their final budget.

The Advisory Committee recognized IPD does not reflect consumer purchasing inflation and is inappropriate to use when considering salary adjustments to address inflation.

❖ ANALYSIS OF AND STRATEGIES TO ADDRESS WORKFORCE NEEDS AND TO SUPPORT EQUITY

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA position:** An analysis should be conducted to identify hard-to-recruit and hard-to-retain positions. Some of the options to recruit/retain staff are being utilized by districts; however, most are district-level decisions, using local revenues. This serves to increase the current structural inequities between districts. Any incentives or bonuses must be state-funded, used as intended, and not be subject to collective bargaining.

We presented several potential options to recruit/retain staff; however, without a complete analysis of what options are viable, it is difficult to know which options should receive priority. It is assumed that implementing multiple options/strategies will be costly. The options we put on the table included:

- Signing bonuses for hard-to-recruit positions
- Bonuses for staff working in “high poverty schools”
- Bonuses for staff who are multilingual
- Commercial Driver License (CDL) bonuses for bus drivers
- Relocation assistance for out of state candidates or recent college graduates
- Expand the student loan forgiveness program
- Incentive payments for Special Education staff and additional incentives to retain
- Paid internships for paraeducators to become teachers
- Increasing substitute funding for both certificated and classified staff
- Increasing insufficient funding for all full-time classified positions
- Implement a “Teachers of Color” scholarship program

Advisory Committee recommendations mirror several WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee reviewed a large number of recruitment/retention incentives. Ultimately, the Advisory Committee recommended the state provide bonuses as a part of a direct grant, with a specific clarification of the use of the bonuses (*Recommendation No. 6*). (NOTE: the Advisory Committee was reluctant to include any conversation of collective bargaining; however, the intention of this clarification regarding the “use of the bonuses” is in-line with our recommendation.)

After reviewing many options, the Advisory Committee recommended a list of bonuses as the highest priority for funding:

- Annual state bonuses for staff who work in high poverty schools (\$7,500 to certificated instructional school-based staff; \$12,500 to certificated administrative school-based staff; \$5,000 to classified staff)
- Initial hiring and ongoing retention bonuses to all school-based staff who work in rural schools (a hiring bonus of \$10,000 to certificated instructional and administrative staff and a \$15,000 retention bonus every three years; \$7,000 hiring bonuses and \$10,500 retention bonuses every three years for classified staff)
- Special education hiring and retention bonuses (a hiring bonus of \$10,000 and a \$15,000 retention bonus every three years)
- Bilingual proficiency grants for K–12 staff who meet proficiency standards for speaking a language that is spoken or taught to students within their unique communities, including tribal languages (the grant amount would be based on the individual needs of the community as documented in a grant application)
- Bonuses for certificated instructional staff who do not have access to National Board certification, such as occupational therapists, school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school psychologists

For each of these recommended bonuses, the Advisory Committee recommends OSPI develop the implementation process to ensure existing staff have immediate access to bonuses they qualify for.

The Advisory Committee also recommended the student transportation funding allocation system should be changed to provide more transparency and reliability, to ensure every school district has enough resources to hire and retain bus drivers and other required student transportation staff (*Recommendation No. 5*). While the WASA/WASBO/WSPA position is consistent with the Advisory Committee recommendation to change the current pupil transportation system, this recommendation is somewhat outside the parameters of the rebasing discussion. There is significant evidence the current funding model has not and will not provide adequate resources to many school districts; however, WASA/WASBO/WSPA, separate from these recommendations, will be asking the Legislature to comprehensively fix the pupil transportation formula to ensure it is more transparent, predictable, and adequately funded. If the Legislature adopts the necessary changes, it will accomplish the goal of WASA/WASBO/WSPA to appropriately fund the system, and will likely result in the fulfillment of the Advisory Committee recommendations regarding pupil transportation staffing.

❖ **COMPENSATION ADJUSTMENTS TO RECRUIT/RETAIN A MORE DIVERSE WORKFORCE**

- **WASA/WASBO/WSPA position: Recruiting and retaining highly qualified multicultural and multilingual candidates into the teaching profession requires a long-term commitment of state resources and energy. Recruitment efforts should begin early in high school—and higher education institutions must make quality programs available. Additionally, expanding mentor programs, including BEST, will provide significant support to beginning educators, assisting in needed retention.**

Advisory Committee recommendations mostly align with WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations.

The Advisory Committee recommends funding for mentor programs to support beginning educators throughout their first three years in the profession, with specific emphasis on funding new or expanded programs that provide support for multicultural or multilingual beginning educators (*Recommendation No. 8*).

The Advisory Committee specifically recommends:

- Funding provided through mentor program grants, similar to the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program, be more targeted in terms of the use of funds to ensure mentors and mentee teachers receive the direct support necessary to ensure beginning educators are successful
- A paraeducator mentor program, similar to BEST, be established to ensure paraeducators that provide direct instruction to students in the classroom receive support from a mentor
- A grant program be created to support a mentoring program for bus drivers separate from the student transportation allocation model
- School principal mentoring programs be included in state funding with an emphasis on supporting school principals in small, rural school districts and in high poverty schools to increase resiliency and decrease turnover

In an additional recommendation (*Recommendation No. 9*), the Advisory Committee recommends an expansion of alternative routes to certification and “grow your own” programs. Consistent with the WASA/WASBO/WSPA position, one of the recommendations would provide current high school students with opportunities to participate in CTE or other programs that would allow students to seamlessly move from high school to college and then to work in the education system, preferably in their own community.

Alternative route programs that are recommended, or recommended to be expanded, include: alternative routes to certification for classified employees currently working within a school system; alternative routes to certification for potential education candidates from other industries or professions; and alternative pathways and/or a professional residency program for substitute educators and educators with emergency certification.

❖ **ADDITIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS PROVIDED**

The Advisory Committee presented a series of additional recommendations, mostly centered on the broad charge to provide recommendations to support recruiting and retaining a multicultural and multilingual educator workforce.

Those additional recommendations include:

- Significantly increasing investments and efforts in cultivating more native educators in Washington schools (*Recommendation No. 10*)
- Implementing a loan deferral program to reduce or eliminate student debt for K–12 employees, specifically targeting individuals who work in rural and/or high poverty schools (*Recommendation No. 11*). This is consistent with one of the WASA/WASBO/WSPA recommendations in addressing workforce needs and to support equity
- Investing in statewide recruitment systems for educators, including the implementation of a single statewide standard application and implementing a statewide educator recruitment campaign for all K-12 school districts (*Recommendation No. 13*)
- Providing state funding and technical support to expand the First People’s Language teacher certification program between school districts and local tribes (*Recommendation No. 14*)