

WSD Board of Directors
Legislative Representative Report
September 24, 2018

On September 21-22, I participated in the WSSDA Annual Legislative Conference on behalf of WSD. The primary purpose of the conference was to select state legislative priorities for which WSSDA will lobby the state legislature in the upcoming 2019 legislative session beginning in January, 2019. The secondary purpose of the conference was to allow districts that share the same geographic region (District 6 in our case) and similar operational challenges based on size (Small School Caucus). There was also an interesting series of panel discussions on school safety.

Legislative Priorities:

After a long series of votes on streamlining and new legislative proposals, the conference voting delegates were asked to prioritize up to 15 individual legislative positions from the final list of 108 new, returning and standing legislative positions.

Based comments from our September 10 meeting, as well as individual priority issues from Directors Stuart, Donald and myself, I compiled and ranked the following legislative priorities in order of importance. Virtually all the topics we addressed in work session are included. I ranked the positions by number of “hits” in Matt’s, Sarah’s, mine and the board work session lists. This ranking was reflected in the ballot I was authorized to cast by virtue of my position as the WSD WSSDA Legislative Representative (the number in parenthesis was the WSSDA priority ranking for that topic in 2018):

1. #42 – Fully Fund Facilities for Mandated Class-size Reduction (14)
2. #40 – English Language Learners (38)
3. #35 – Streamlining Summative Assessments (8)
4. #33 – Expanding Access to and Equitable Funding for all Dual-Credit Options (32)
5. #27 – School Construction Revenue (N/A)
6. #24 – Linking Graduation Requirements to Career Pathways (N/A)
7. #25 – Mitigate Regionalization Formula Inequities (N/A)
8. #37 – Local Control to Sanction Educational Experiences (30)
9. #44 – Streamlining Reporting (50)
10. #41 – Federal Funding Multipliers (60)
11. #7 – Levy Rollbacks and Hold Harmless (1)
12. #45 – Special Education and Special Needs Students (2)
13. #15/51 (Consolidated) Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) and Behavioral Supports for Students (10)
14. #47 – Career and Technical Education Funding (34)
15. #17 – Comprehensive School Safety (N/A)

FYI, the following are WSSDA’s top 10 legislative priorities from last year:

1. #7 – Levy Rollbacks & Hold Harmless

2. #45 – Special Ed and Special Needs Students
3. #83 – School Construction
4. #12 – Attract and Retain High Quality Staff
5. #110 – Federal Dream Act
6. #86 – Compensation Technical Work Group Recommendations
7. #87 – Full Funding of Basic Education
8. #35 – Streamlining Summative Assessments
9. #96 – Passage of School Finance Issues
10. #15 – Social Emotional Learning (SEL) and Behavioral Support for Students

I wanted to also address some of the comments that were made during the School Safety presentations. There was a panel of school officials and state reps that largely focused on threat assessments. More importantly, in my opinion, was a separate panel of students from districts around the state who spoke on the importance of mental health resources and social emotional supports as opposed to physical or operational interventions. While gun deaths at schools are tragic, we learned that middle and high school suicide rates are 2 a week in Washington State. In my opinion, in addition to disaster preparedness, this is the primary “safety” issue we must address as a district.