



DRAFT PRIORITIES FOR LEGISLATIVE PLATFORM

September 2025 Board Meeting

FOR DISCUSSION: This is the full Board’s last opportunity to weigh in on which items should be reflected in the platform for the 2026 legislative session. Feedback will guide the Legislative Committee in polishing and finalizing the platform language for Board approval in October.

Context and Framing Priorities

The State Board of Education recognizes the significant fiscal challenges the Legislature faces this session. As context for all other priorities, the Board underscores two foundational priorities:

- Reaffirm the state’s paramount duty to “make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders” and amply fund basic education.
- Address federal Medicaid cuts – With federal funding reductions, the Legislature will face the urgent task of stepping in to protect health care access across Washington. The Board supports this priority, recognizing that Medicaid cuts also directly affect K–12 schools through reduced support for students with disabilities, school-based health care, and individualized services (such as IEPs and IFSPs).

Protect Recent Progress

- Prevent K–12 cuts that disproportionately harm underserved students.
- Protect civil rights gains, inclusive curricula, language access supports, student privacy rights, and protected class legislation.
- Maintain investments that promote student mental health and a positive school climate.

Restore Critical Resources

- High School and Beyond Plan Universal Platform – Reinstate funding for districts to move to the new online HSBP platform, a recently established requirement, ensuring all students have equitable, consistent access to explore and plan for their future goals.
- School–community partnerships – Community-based organizations have faced devastating cuts, which limit their capacity to fulfill their vital role in supporting students through tutoring, mentorship, culturally relevant services, and family engagement. The Board urges reinstatement of the \$7M/year proviso for Treehouse’s Graduation Success Program, which supports students in foster care, as one way to help address these losses.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

Foundational Priorities

These priorities are **already adopted** in the Board's 2024-2028 Strategic Plan:

- Promote educational equity where each student receives the support they need.
- Allocate funding based on student needs.
- Fully fund special education and support inclusionary practices.
- Invest in evidence-based strategies for learning recovery.
- Promote student well-being and a supportive learning environment.
- Provide equitable access to relevant and engaging learning opportunities.

Potential Session Issues

These items are not included in the draft platform but are anticipated to come up during the session. Board members are asked to consider whether the Board should take a position if/when they emerge.

Issues likely aligned with Board priorities (would typically advocate for):

- Federal cuts to food assistance programs (SNAP): Reductions and loss of benefits will affect numerous Washingtonians and, like Medicaid cuts, have direct impacts on K-12, including increased pressure on free/reduced lunch programs.

Other issues the Board has not historically weighed in on (for consideration):

- Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs ("keeping the lights on")
- Other federal developments impacting K-12 education
- Interest from charter advocates in reopening the authorization window for establishing new charter schools
- Potential proposals on student cell phone use in classrooms