

An Innovative, Accountable Education System: Building A Better Future For Every Child and a Stronger Economy For Washington

Education is the paramount duty of our state government, but today we are not meeting the high expectations we have or that our kids deserve. As governor, Jay Inslee will advance creative, innovative classrooms where children are exposed to a rich, broad, and flexible curriculum taught by highly qualified and valued teachers, and parents become more integrated into their children's education. This is key to our future, and to a new economy that allows Washington to compete with the rest of the world.

"I will lead a statewide effort to make the improvement of our schools and the future of our kids our number one priority. It will take all of us working together - parents, citizens, community leaders, business leaders and educators - to build a better future for our children and our state. We all have a role to play."

Building a world-class education system means preparing our kids for productive citizenship and for the jobs of tomorrow in a student-focused system.

Jay recognizes that in these tough times, we simply do not have the money to do everything, so we will have to focus more effectively with what we have. Jay will do this by putting kids first and setting aggressive goals and expectations to improve student and school performance. We cannot afford anymore empty promises. No excuses, only performance.

Jay's vision for Washington's education system by the year 2020:

- All students graduate from high school prepared with 21st century skills.
- Achievement and opportunity gaps among students are eliminated.
- All Washington students will have access to post-secondary education or training to pursue the career of her or his choice.

As governor, Jay will achieve this by:

- Ensuring every child has excellent teachers and administrators.
- Providing excellent schools for every child.
- Providing high-quality early learning to every child.

Delivering 21st Century Schools for Every Child

Many of today's jobs didn't exist just ten years ago. We can expect the same for the jobs ten years from now. Too many students, however, are graduating without the skills they need to attend college or fill the well-paying jobs that local employers are or will be offering. While our students' SAT/ACT scores are admirably strong, graduation rates have increased only modestly and college degree production remains abysmally low. This requires we provide our students with knowledge and skills that will allow them to adapt and grow with the changing job market, and become creative thinkers, problem solvers and communicators.

Encouraging Creativity and Innovation in our Schools

Even as our state has slowly disinvested in education over the years, our schools, our teachers, and our students have found ways to exceed expectations in a number of ways. The most exciting is the development of Innovation Schools, many of which have been recognized through a bill passed last year. We must support and encourage even more of this work by expanding these pockets of innovation elsewhere throughout Washington.

- **Create More Innovation Schools**

Institute a competitive grant system, called the Innovative Schools Initiative, to spur more innovation in science and arts programs. Partner with the private sector, communities, and research institutions and utilize programs such as the STEM Lighthouse program to help guide more schools toward this goal.

- **Improve Performance Through Collaborative Schools**

Improve performance at our lowest performing schools by fully supporting the new Collaborative Schools project, which will be operated in partnership with a college or university for the training of future teachers and for educational research and professional development.

- **Introduce New Opportunities for Learning Through New Technologies in the Classroom**

- Provide students access to technology tools in the classroom by creating public-private partnerships with Washington's businesses and research institutions to expose kids to real-world, hands-on science and technology learning.
- Encourage the development of more programs like Washington State University's Imagine Tomorrow that incentivize high school student science team projects.
- Convene a task force of teachers, education leaders, technology business leaders, students and citizens to investigate potential uses of new technology in Washington's schools, as well as the appropriate training needed for educators.
- Break down barriers to allow more virtual classroom projects. In-class online tools can be a powerful and effective learning experience for students who might never get the opportunity to leave their school.

- **Transition to Online Sources of Curricula that Meet our State Standards**

The state spends nearly \$65 million a year on textbooks. Washington can greatly reduce that cost, as outlined in E2SHB 2337, while providing students the most up-to-date resources within the new Common Core education standards.

Focusing on the Student's Pathway to Success

New data, new competition and new technologies all demand a new approach to education that keeps kids in school and equips them with the knowledge and skills they will need to succeed in life.

Early Learning: Ensuring Every Child Enters Kindergarten Ready to Succeed

The data is unequivocal: the brain development that occurs in a child's first five years of life is

fundamental to their lifelong ability to reach their highest potential. Early learning opens the door of opportunity for all children, leading to greater earning potential as adults.

According to the state Department of Early Learning, every dollar invested in high-quality early learning can return up to \$17 in benefits, ranging from lower costs for special education and repeat grades, to lower child welfare and public health costs. [1] Washington is recognized as a national leader in early education, but more needs to be done to reach as many kids as possible.

If we are serious about building a 21st century education system that ensures all our children graduate with the skills and knowledge to be successful in life, then we have to start early. In order for all children to start school as healthy and confident learners, we must build an early learning system that meets the complex and diverse needs of children and families with programs and services that are accessible, affordable and high quality.

- **Invest in home visitation programs to provide at-risk families the support and guidance they need to raise healthy children who are ready to succeed.**
- **Support the implementation of the Race to the Top Early Learning Challenge Grant to improve the quality of early learning settings through the Quality Rating and Improvement System (QRIS). [2] Implement the Washington Inventory of Developing Skills (WaKIDS) program to align early learning and K-12 and capture the crucial information that will help address the opportunity gap.**
- **Serve all eligible kids in the Enhanced Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) to prepare more vulnerable 3- and 4-year-olds for school.**
- **Continue our investments that support working families, such as Working Connections Child Care, so they can afford safe, stable, high-quality early learning environments for their children.**
- **Rather than investing in class size reduction in all grades immediately, phase in all-day kindergarten and prioritize class size reduction in the K-3 grade levels, where the impact will be the greatest.**

Closing the Opportunity Gap

Kids in our poor and minority communities can achieve equally in a system that treats them fairly and maintains high expectations. We must provide equal access to tools, resources, and opportunities for all of our students. We cannot accept an educational system that disenfranchises or discourages students from reaching their full potential. We cannot afford excuses.

- **Bolster innovative educational curricula, cultural competency and education strategies, including ethnic studies and transitional bilingual education.**
- **Recruit more teachers from minority communities in order to reflect the diversity in our schools, similar to the Recruiting Washington Teachers program and the Heritage105 program, a residency-based teacher preparation program at Heritage University. [5]**

Washington falls near the bottom of states in teacher diversity. We need to recruit teachers who reflect the diversity of their community and improve cultural competency among all educators and administrations.

- **Create teacher residencies in urban schools, an immersion program that partners with a university teaching program to help meet demand in high-need fields.**

Keeping Kids in School and Ready to Learn

Washington's progress toward closing the opportunity gap is unacceptable and untenable. Those who do not graduate from high school will earn 73 percent less over their lifetimes than those who do. [3]

We can increase graduation rates much faster and help keep kids in school through intervention, school innovation and improvement, curricula better tailored to their needs and by demonstrating that there are many paths to success in life and, most importantly, they are all within reach.

- **Target chronically underperforming high schools that are not meeting the needs of their students and have unacceptably high dropout rates.**
Focusing resources on these high schools will help them reach a 90 percent high school graduation rate by 2020. This means a more than three-percentage point increase per year to climb to 90 percent. [4]
- **Expand our corps of dropout coaches, counselors and community outreach personnel in our most high-need school districts.**
These faculty members visit homes, speak multiple languages, re-engage struggling students and their families and significantly increase a student's chance of returning to school and earning their diploma. Pasco High School increased its graduation rate from 55.6 percent in 2005 to 82.9 percent in 2010 through greater intervention by administrators and achievement specialists. Cascade High in Everett has gone from a 62.5 percent to 88.2 percent on-time graduation rate over the past eight years.
- **Expand additional extra-curricular and after-school programs targeted at schools with the most at-risk youth.**
Whether it is a science club, arts classes or an athletic activity, these programs provide kids a safe place to go, additional learning opportunities and a reason to stay engaged in school after the school day ends.

Setting Students' Sights Beyond High School

In today's internationally competitive world, we know that our kids need more than a 12th grade education.

By high school, all students should have a plan for post-secondary education that will provide them the vision they need to be successful in life. Expectations should be set high for all kids and we should embrace and honor all post-secondary paths whether they involve a university, community college, technical college or the trades. Just as importantly, we must provide our students with access to post-secondary education opportunities.

- **Help every student develop a career plan that includes the coursework, internships, apprenticeships, college visits, enrichment programs and courses to achieve it, beginning in middle school, such as the work done by Navigation 101, Washington’s career and college readiness program.**
- **Encourage Running Start, as well as the College in the High School program, a cooperative program between local school districts and colleges, which can reduce the time it takes to earn a degree and lower college costs. Programs like that of the Spokane School District Skills Center help students earn dual high school and community college credits while training them in job skills to meet the job-market needs in the Spokane Valley.**
- **Put college within reach for more students**
 - Encourage low-income 7th and 8th grade students to apply for the College Bound Scholarship through the Higher Education Coordinating Board. The program promises tuition (at public institution rates) and a small book allowance. [6]
 - Promote corporate participation in the Washington State Opportunity Scholarship, thereby increasing the number of students who can receive the scholarship. The fund, administered by the College Success Foundation, began with a \$50 million dollar commitment from Microsoft and Boeing. The Opportunity Scholarship promotes bachelor’s degrees in high demand STEM and health care fields by offering scholarships to low- and middle-income Washington residents.
 - Engage more businesses and organizations to participate in our state Work Study program with continued state support, offering work opportunities for students who need extra income.
 - Promote and support the Passport to College program and the Governors’ Scholarship for Foster Youth to give foster kids a fair shot at a better life.

Ensuring Every Child has Excellent Teachers and Administrators

Every child deserves great teachers and principals, as well as classified employees who keep our schools running. The vast majority of the people who dedicate themselves to the future of our state are doing exceptional work for often less than exceptional compensation or reward. Scapegoating public employees, as has happened in states like Wisconsin, is unacceptable and counterproductive. It is also completely unacceptable to have substandard teachers and administrators in our classrooms.

Ultimately, the responsibility lies with us, the parents. We must collaborate with our schools and communities to benefit our children. Staying in contact with your child’s teacher, volunteering when possible, setting high expectations and monitoring homework assignments and projects all help contribute to our ultimate goal of a world-class education for our children.

Professional Development for Our Teachers, Principals, and Superintendents.

The vast majority of Washington’s teachers are doing an admirable job and continually hone their skills in the classroom. Yet some new or struggling teachers need extra training and assistance opportunities and we owe it to them and their students to provide it.

Similarly, exceptional leaders have demonstrated their ability to turn around entire schools and districts. We must provide all leaders with the training to make our state's many pockets of innovation and success the norm, rather than the exception. Our goal is continuous, lifelong professional development and improvement by our teachers and administrators.

- **Build upon the successful efforts of the Washington Education Association and others to increase the number of teachers who achieve National Board Certification. Washington currently ranks fourth nationally in national board certified teachers, with an additional 945 teachers receiving certification in 2011.**
- **Develop and implement a teacher leadership program for exceptional teachers with increased earning potential for additional mentoring responsibilities.**
- **Partner with local businesses, colleges, universities and communities to increase professional development that results in increased student success in math and science, as achieved in the Renton School District.**
- **Build mentoring projects and partnerships such as an "Adopt-A-School" program, with local business leaders and foundations to collaborate on leadership training and technical support.**
- **Bolster principal training and support utilizing the Association of Washington School Principals, such as the Assessor/Mentor Program, which provides feedback and support to both new and veteran principals.**
- **Increase superintendent training and support utilizing the Washington Association of School Administrators to provide leadership training, ensuring superintendents have the skills to manage staff and resources effectively and inspire innovation and creativity within their schools, through collaboration, mentoring and training opportunities.**
- **Provide greater training and mentoring opportunities to newly elected school board members to ensure they have the support necessary for the job, through training, inter-district partnerships and workshops, such as those offered by the Washington State School Directors' Association.**

Evaluation, Accountability and Respect for Teachers and Principals

There are 56,000 teachers and thousands of principals in our state - and the vast majority of them are working longer hours with greater demands and fewer resources to meet the growing and diverse learning needs of our kids.

We need to recognize that top-down accountability measures and increased expectations will not, on their own, achieve the level of improvement our kids deserve. The primary point of a good evaluation system is to develop human growth and capacity and motivate staff to improve the skills, knowledge and craft of good teaching. However, we must acknowledge that a small minority of teachers and principals simply are not up to the task of preparing students for the challenges of our global economy.

- **An excellent teacher in every class, an excellent principal in every school and an excellent superintendent in every district will require new levels of collaboration and new levels of accountability.**
 - Washington’s evaluation system should acknowledge excellence, provide support for teachers and principals in need of improvement and timely removal for those who are not able to meet high standards.
 - Evaluations should play a significant role in personnel placement and retention decisions, in addition to considerations of seniority, local needs (such as ESL, science and math, etc.) and student growth.
 - The new evaluation system should influence and expedite the appeals process, reducing the costly time it can take to come to a termination decision.
 - The evaluation system should end the practice of passing low-performing teachers from school to school.
 - Principals must be able to demonstrate skills in instructional leadership and decision-making, as well as innovative approaches to quality improvement and focusing the entire school on student learning, and will be held to the same new standards we expect of our teachers.
 - Superintendent accountability is vital to the integrity of the education every student receives. We must encourage greater sharing of best practices, leadership techniques and creative problem-solving skills amongst superintendents.

- **Institute a system of public accountability that gives a grade to every high school, middle school and elementary school.**

Accountability is a shared responsibility, and we all must participate in the success of our schools. In order to spur more parent engagement in their child’s school, every parent will receive their child’s annual school report card, which includes multiple measures of school and district success based on a statewide standard developed with stakeholder input. The next governor must team resources from federal, public-private partnerships, and the state to pull low-performing schools back up.

Meeting the Paramount Duty of the State

In January of this year, the Washington State Supreme Court ruled that Olympia is failing to meet the paramount duty of the state: amply providing for the basic, equitable education of all our kids. We must immediately put our state on a trajectory to reverse the trend of cutting education budgets and live up to our fundamental obligation to our state's children by the court-imposed deadline of 2018.

The most important element of accomplishing that goal is to get our economy on a sound footing and create jobs that help generate the revenue needed to restore education funding and educate our kids. The governor cannot offer empty promises of increased funding - it takes diligent effort to turn around our economy and then dedicate additional revenues toward meeting this goal.

In the short term, we must continue doing more with the resources that we have by focusing

existing resources and seeking out targeted savings throughout government to fund education priorities that achieve results. We must adopt a set of policies that change the way Olympia does business - from closing unproductive corporate tax loopholes to delivering health care and government services more efficiently. Lastly, we need annual review to assess our progress and force the difficult decisions that may be necessary to keep us on track.

One thing we cannot do is hold education funding hostage to ideological or partisan politics - threatening deeper cuts as a means to leverage other political or policy objectives. Our kids, and the taxpayers of this state, deserve better.

We can and must move forward with policies that demonstrate proven results while generating the resources necessary for success. Our kids cannot afford us kicking this can down the road any longer. Their future and the future of our state depend upon it.

Doing More with what we Have

Budget and economic realities demand that we continue making tough decisions and set real priorities. We need to focus on restoring class size reduction funds in grades K-3, protect early childhood education programs to prepare kids for school and adopt money saving technologies - from e-books to clean energy retrofits - that put more money into instruction and less into overhead. It means we need to recognize that our educators need and deserve increased compensation, but we will not be able to achieve that until the economy recovers. It means funding should focus on implementing best practices to close the opportunity gap and increase access to quality education for all students.

It means we need to recognize that with higher delivery of quality and expectations, our educators certainly need and deserve increased compensation, more time to collaborate and innovate, and greater autonomy in decisions around curriculum and assessments. We will not, however, be able to achieve all of this until the economy recovers. It means funding should focus on implementing best practices to close the opportunity gap and increase access to quality education for all students.

Reinvesting in Public Education

- **Reinvigorate our economy and create jobs to improve the revenue outlook.**
Ultimately, a strong and vibrant economy is the key to long-term and sustained public education funding under our state's system of revenue collection. By focusing on protecting the jobs we have and creating the jobs of tomorrow, we can provide kids with the education they deserve and provide access to the job opportunities they need. Increasing education results increases jobs, which increases revenue, which increases investment in education and so forth.
- **Reverse the trend of health care inflation eating into education spending by bending the rate of medical inflation.**
We can provide better quality health care while lowering overall health care expenditures. By investing in wellness programs and preventive medicine and addressing over-utilization, organizations across the country have achieved tangible results. King County alone was able to save \$61 million, which translates to about \$400 million in savings if similar results are achieved by the state.

- **Sunset corporate tax loopholes that have outlived their purpose and are not generating jobs.**

Our tax code contains hundreds of tax loopholes that need to be examined to determine whether they are achieving their purposes, such as job creation. Our current system of review fails to adequately address this problem, and should be improved by requiring the legislature to sunset loopholes that would otherwise continue automatically.

- **Expand a system of constant quality improvement to all government agencies and processes to produce more services for every taxpayer dollar spent.**

Private industries in our state have adopted these systems, variously called “Lean Management,” “Kaizen System,” or “Toyota System,” of quality improvement and efficiency. Boeing, Virginia Mason and Premera Blue Cross all have similar systems and have seen significant results. Applying these principles to government can help us deliver more to the taxpayer.

- **Implement an annual efficiency review to track the progress we are making, and make recommendations to keep us on track.**

This review will monitor our progress on assessing corporate tax loopholes, improving health care and government services, and creating jobs. It will project the expected new education revenue generated from these activities and make recommendations to lawmakers, driving the difficult decisions needed to keep us on track to meet our paramount duty.

[1] http://www.del.wa.gov/publications/elac-gris/docs/ELP_Exec.pdf

[2] Early Learning Plan Strategy #24

[3] <http://new.every1graduates.org/wp-content/uploads/2012/03/BuildingAGradNation2012-WebVersion-Final-031712.pdf>

[4] http://www.all4ed.org/about_the_crisis/schools/dropout

[5] <http://www.heritage.edu/CurrentStudents/20102011Catalog/CollegeofEducationandPsychology/GraduateEducationDepartment/HeritageUniversity105/tabid/504/Default.aspx>

[6] <http://hecb.wa.gov/PreparingForCollege/CollegeBound>

[7] http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/po-05-01.pdf

[8] http://www.wested.org/online_pubs/po-05-01.pdf