



# Public Policy Agenda 2020-21

## Vancouver Public Schools

Vancouver Public Schools serves more than 23,000 students and employs approximately 3,400 teachers and staff members in Southwest Washington.

### Board of Directors:

Camara Banfield  
Tracie Barrows  
Kathy Decker  
Wendy Smith  
Kyle Sproul

### Superintendent:

Steven T. Webb, Ed.D.

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### Mission Statement:

*Excellence in Education*  
In partnership with home and community, Vancouver Public Schools provides an innovative learning environment that engages and empowers each student to develop the knowledge and essential skills to become a competent, responsible and compassionate citizen.

### We believe:

Education is vital to creating and sustaining a strong economy and supporting the knowledgeable and skilled workforce necessary to attract and retain higher wage jobs. Education provides access and opportunities for all students, creating the conditions for them to succeed in post-secondary learning, careers and life. Education is our society's greatest investment, empowering people to thrive and lessening their reliance on social services.

### In the short term, we advise policy-makers to:

Preserve funding for K-12 education consistent with the *McCleary v. State* court orders and the state's constitutional "paramount duty."

- Protect local effort assistance (levy equalization) funds so that disparate student opportunity gaps among property-rich and property-poor school districts are not widened.
- Hold districts harmless in funding for transportation and nutrition services, given public health requirements to continue remote or hybrid learning and state-legislated policy to provide meals regardless of family payment.
- Promptly appropriate federal COVID-19 relief dollars to school districts without supplanting state funds.
- Avoid creating or worsening financial inequities.
- Support districts in meeting their contractual obligations; do not make mid-year budget cuts.
- Oppose additional mandates, funded or unfunded, for K-12 schools.
- Allow districts greater flexibility in the use of resources.
- Help communities close the technology/connectivity gap.

### For the long term, we advise policy-makers to:

1. Update staff allocation formulas associated with the Prototypical School Funding Model, which are outdated and unrealistic. They should reflect current needs for counselors, psychologists, nurses, safety and security personnel, etc.
2. Address inequities in the new K-12 funding structure, including special education, state salary allocations and staff experience factors, the School Employees' Benefits Board insurance program and regionalization.
3. Adjust the inadequate funding formulas in the State Construction Assistance Program, which fail to recognize the true cost of construction or educational space needs.
4. Enact student-centered K-12 education policy with a commitment to equity, excellence and innovation and a focus on the needs of the whole child.
5. Protect the authority of school boards to determine local goals and priorities, oversee school and district improvement efforts, and meet the unique learning needs of the students they serve.