Public Policy Agenda 2022-23
Vancouver Public Schools

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.

Our highest legislative priorities:
1. **Special Education** In the last four years, the Legislature has increased the special education excess cost multiplier and provided additional funding for safety net awards. These steps forward to fully funding the cost of special education are appreciated and we urge lawmakers to continue to pursue incremental and creative approaches toward fully funding special education.

2. **Professional Staff** We continue to make progress in updating unrealistic and outdated staff allocation formulas associated with the Prototypical School Funding Model. Funding should be aligned with current needs of student wellness, transportation, safety and security personnel and other essential positions and should also reflect the current job market. Our students deserve professional staff support.

3. **Transportation Review** The current Pupil Transportation funding model is complex and outdated. The Office of Financial Management recently found that in most situations, it does provide adequate resources to school districts and recommends, at the very least, that more funding be provided to the system. We appreciate the 2022 Legislature’s provision of additional funding to address additional costs to transport special passengers, and would encourage the legislature to update the funding model.

Additionally, we advise policy-makers to:
1. Allow Washington state voters to decide if school district bond measures should be approved with a simple majority vote.

2. Continue to invest in supporting students to address their academic, mental health and social-emotional learning needs.

3. Help communities close the technology/connectivity gap.

4. Adjust the inadequate funding formulas in the State Construction Assistance Program, which fail to recognize the true cost of construction or educational space needs.

5. Ensure that all K-12 education policies are enacted with a commitment to equity, excellence and innovation and a focus on the needs of the whole child.

6. Support local school boards in overseeing school and district improvement efforts and meeting the unique learning needs of the students they serve.

7. Provide greater flexibility of resources by limiting unfunded requirements that must be supported by local funding sources.