



*Equipping every student to engage, thrive, and contribute in an ever-changing world.*

### **Vashon Island School District 2019 Legislative Priorities**

Vashon Island School District's priorities are focused on providing all students the opportunities to succeed in school and in life. Most importantly, we do this work by eliminating opportunity gaps for groups of students that share an historical disadvantage based on race, income, and other factors that prevent them from reaching their potential. We recognize and appreciate the work the legislature accomplished last session. However, the state must continue to adjust the funding system to match student needs today - particularly racial equity, student wellness, special education and equitable access to modern school facilities.

#### **VISD Critical Issues**

- **Regionalization:** Vashon Island School District received 12% regionalization. VISD has been put in the position of competing with surrounding area school districts who received 18%. Currently, at 12% regionalization, Vashon loses over \$600,000 per year in regionalization funding; a huge competitive disadvantage in teacher and support staff recruitment. Due to the high cost of housing, transportation to and from the island, food, and fuel on the island, Vashon Island School District already faces significant hiring challenges.  
**Proposed Solution:** Increase Vashon Island School District regionalization factor to 18%.
- **Special Education:** State funding for students receiving special services continues to be underfunded, forcing VISD to use limited levy funds to backfill the state's funding gap. Currently, VISD is projecting a shortfall of approximately \$547,000.00 for the 2018/19 school year.  
**Proposed Solution:** Fund the actual cost of basic special education services and increase access to safety net funding.
- **Local Levy Funding:** Inequities between districts were exacerbated by capping levy authority of property rich districts like Vashon Island School District. In 2017, Vashon Island voters approved the authority for VISD to collect approximately \$4,305,000.00 in levy funding for 2018/19. Due to the current levy cap, VISD is only able to collect \$3,675,000.00 (\$2,500.00 per FTE).  
**Proposed Solution:** We recommend VISD is given the authority to collect what our voters approved and at the same time we encourage continued evaluation of alternative school and tax funding plans.
- **Student Wellness and Safety:** Allocations in the prototypical funding model for support positions such as counselors, psychologists, and nurses continue to be far too low to support our students. Currently the state underfunds several student wellness positions: state funds school counselors 3.336 - VISD staffs 5, state funds .035 school psychologists - VISD staffs 2, state funds .231 nurses - VISD staffs 1.6. These supports are critical to meet the needs of our students and families. Current staffing levels are already below national recommendations. We cannot risk staffing at lower levels so VISD is forced to bridge the funding gap using local levy dollars.  
**Proposed Solution:** Enhance funding for student health and safety, counseling, and social-emotional services that support student learning.

#### **VISD Issues of High Concern**

- **Simple Majority:** Many districts have difficulty passing local requests for capital improvements.  
**Proposed Solution:** VISD recommends the legislature advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to be approved with a simple majority vote.
- **Update School Facility Construction and Space Formulas:** Districts struggle to address the escalating capital demands of lower class sizes and full day kindergarten.  
**Proposed Solution:** Enhance the state's investment in K-12 construction by making the formulas for the Construction Cost Allowance and Student Space Allocation more closely reflect actual construction costs.