



Policy Brief

PB 99:5

February 5, 1999

1999-2001 K-12 Budget General Fund State Highlights

The Washington Assessment of Student Learning tests administered last Spring revealed that many fourth and seventh graders failed to meet state standards for reading and math. And public opinion routinely expresses support for improving public education.

Reflecting his often-stated belief that the public schools should receive top priority in the state budget, Gov. Gary Locke's proposed 1999-2001 budget increases K-12 spending by \$584.6 million over the 1997-99 appropriation including his supplemental. That's \$318 million more than the governor's staff said was required to maintain current services.

Within the budget proposal are a number of program changes:

The governor wants to give more financial support to school districts with a high concentration of children from low-income families. These children tended to do poorly on recent state tests.

General Fund Spending for K-12 Education

Dollars in Millions	1997-1999	1999	1997-1999	1999-2001	Change	
Functional Area	Biennial Budget	Supplemental	Total	Proposed	Dollars	Percent
Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	78.6	0.1	78.7	73.9	-4.8	-6.1%
General Apportionment	6879.2	-15.5	6863.7	7141.3	277.6	4.0%
Pupil Transportation	354.6	-0.5	354.1	374.6	20.5	5.8%
School Food Services	6.2	-	6.2	6.2	-	0.0%
Special Education	750.1	-0.5	749.6	779.1	29.5	3.9%
Educational Service Districts	9.0	-	9.0	9.1	0.1	1.1%
Levy Equalization	168.4	-3.2	165.2	191.5	26.3	15.9%
Institutional Education	35.5	0.3	35.8	43.2	7.4	20.7%
Highly Capable Students	11.8	-	11.8	12.5	0.7	5.9%
Education Reform	40.6	-0.1	40.6	56.9	16.4	40.3%
Bilingual Instruction	62.9	0.8	63.7	72.2	8.5	13.3%
Learning Assistance Program	121.2	-0.5	120.7	193.2	72.5	60.1%
Education Enhancement	105.2	-0.2	105.0	111.7	6.7	6.4%
Compensation Adjustments	194.6	-0.4	194.2	317.4	123.2	63.4%
Total	8817.9	-19.7	8798.3	9382.8	584.6	6.6%

Locke wants \$40 million GFS for more teachers or teacher aides at the elementary schools. This money would supplement federal funding to hire the equivalent of 1,000 new teachers. Instructional staff funding is determined by a student-to-teacher formula. So larger districts would receive funds for one or more actual positions. Smaller districts would receive funding for a partial position. Locke would allow school districts to use the money for either certified teachers or classroom aides, but only in the elementary grades.

Departing from his previous strong support for charter schools, the governor introduces a plan for what he calls Opportunity School Districts. He asks for \$4.8 million for this pilot program. Opportunity School Districts will be free from many of the usual educational regulations, but remain subject to civil rights laws, collective bargaining agreements, health and safety regulations and educational reform requirements. Locke would earmark \$2 million for training and other assistance. To qualify for the program, all schools within a district must participate.

Traditionally, the state has given more money to schools scoring low on standardized tests. When scores improve, the extra funding is taken away. Locke proposes to let schools keep the additional funds once scores rise. This would remove an apparent disincentive to improve scores and give these schools more resources for student learning.

The governor proposes performance-award grants for districts meeting or exceeding the new accountability targets. He wants \$15.8 million for a \$25/student grant for districts that every three years reduce by 25% the proportion of students failing to meet the achievement standards.

Locke wants \$16 million GFS for continuation of the Reading Corps, to promote intensive reading instruction and tutoring for students in grades K through six. The funds would go to local districts for intensive reading instruction and tutoring after school, on weekends and during the summer.

Locke wants \$3 million GFS for alternative schools serving students with academic and personal problems. Truancy, suspension and expulsion have made it hard for these students to do well in regular school programs.


For teachers, the governor proposed 2 percent cost-of-living pay raises on September 1, 1999 and 2000. The total cost: \$173.8 million.

Also for teachers, Locke wants \$3.8 million for grants to beginning teachers for on-the-job training and mentoring. About 4,225 beginning teachers would be eligible.

Locke proposes \$2.7 million GFS for summer accountability institutes. And, he asks for \$1.2 million GFS for scholarships to 200 outstanding teacher candidates in critical areas such as math, science, and special education. The funding is included in the request for the Higher Education Coordinating Board.

As an incentive to earn state and national certifications, Locke would award teachers with recognition pay. State certification would land \$1,000 in additional annually salary, and national certification \$3,000. The governor wants \$830,000 GFS for this proposal, including \$500,000 GFS provided for development of the tests.

Assessment of students entering the teacher-education programs in state colleges and universities is not standardized. The governor proposes the development and use of standard assessment. Tests would be administered to those applying to education programs and for state certification. The governor proposes \$2.7 million to develop and administer the tests. Standardized testing for teacher candidates would begin by September 1, 2000. About 6,300 candidates would be tested initially.

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