



WASHOE COUNTY SCHOOL DISTRICT (WCSD) BOARD OF TRUSTEES

Legislative Platform for the 2017 Session

In order to serve the students, families, and community of Washoe County, the WCSD Board of Trustees is in favor of legislation that supports WCSD's strategic plan, *Envision WCSD 2020*. We also support the removal of any current or potential mandates that may restrict implementation of this plan. Further, as the elected education body for our community, we will not support any new unfunded mandates.

Operating Funds

The Board of Trustees supports K-12 funding that is whole and stable. It is clear that in order for Nevada to provide a comprehensive education system and continue to compete for economic development opportunities, K-12 per pupil funding must keep pace with the rest of the nation. The WCSD Board of Trustees endorses:

- DSA-basic per pupil support mechanism that keeps pace with increasing labor and inflationary costs. Any increases in programmatic spending will require revenue above the projected baseline budget.
- The current Nevada Plan funding formula must be revised to meet the needs of students in poverty, English Learners, special education students, and gifted students; however, this cannot be done at the expense of the basic educational needs of ALL students. This plan should be fully implemented with adequate funds to ensure districts receive sufficient funds to cover operating costs.
- Ensuring all revenue dedicated to K-12 education is used for the original intent through the creation of a Rainy Day fund for education and not diverted to the state's general fund.
- Continued emphasis on early literacy and language acquisition for all students, with an emphasis on English Learners and students in poverty through continuation of the Zoom and Victory School funding. Districts should be allowed to provide input on which schools would receive the additional funding.
- Reform to the property tax to ensure a more stable and predictable revenue that is matched with demand for student services.

Special Education Modernization

A child with a disability may have additional social and emotional needs, academic needs, and physical needs. Their needs may require specially designed instruction, direct or related services, adult support, and accommodations in the classroom. Our students with disabilities can and must be able to access grade level content and be held to the same rigor as their non-disabled

peers with appropriate support. This support and instruction is critical, is required by federal law, and is expensive. School districts must serve, at a high level, all students who come to their school doors. The Board of Trustees endorses:

- Senate Bill 49, sponsored by the Washoe County School District, removes the 13% upper limit on the number of students eligible for additional state supported funding to support their unique needs, challenges, and opportunities.
- Reform to the adjusted diploma eligibility to limit that option to students truly unable to meet the requirements for a standard diploma, including accommodations.
- Additional support, training, and incentives to ensure highly effective educators and paraprofessionals are available to our special education students.

College and Career Readiness

Washoe County School District is committed to ensuring student academic growth through an aligned system of curriculum and assessment founded on rigorous and relevant instruction that meets the needs of every child in our diverse student population. The Board of Trustees endorses:

- Modernization of the path to high school graduation including reconsideration of credit requirements, end of course exams, and applicability of the adjusted diploma.
- Reducing barriers to achieve a personalized learning pathway for all students that could include competency based education pilots, increased opportunities for dual enrollment and internships, increased opportunities for certification and career pathways that lead to more relevant educational outcomes for students with an emphasis on district flexibility and accompanying financial support.
- Compliance with and continued use of the state adopted Nevada Academic Content Standards.
- Fair and timely administration and results of the computerized Smarter Balanced and End of Course assessment programs including the infrastructure and hardware necessary to administer the assessments with an emphasis on the protection of students' and staff privacy.



- Expanded and increased flexibility in the deployment of district-led technology programs supported by innovative 21st Century instructional practices, and programs in digital citizenship and digital literacy to prepare our students for today's workplace.
- Expansion of PreK programs through federal funding that is matched from the state as well as simplified and aligned student eligibility requirements within each funding stream.

Human Capital

The Board of Trustees believes that education reform and increased student achievement begin and end with high quality human capital investments. With highly effective principals and teachers in every school and classroom, students will succeed and graduate ready for college and/or highly-skilled careers. The WCSD Board of Trustees endorses:

- Ensuring that educator performance evaluations are fair, valid, defensible and properly tailored to employees' responsibilities and district values and needs.
- Legislative changes that modify current law to provide more clarity and less administrative burden to allow districts to be more efficient and effective in the area of human capital.
- Financial support for professional development and career lattice incentives for recruitment and retention of teachers and administrators around evaluations, Nevada Academic Content Standards, and other relevant education best practices.

Local Control

Washoe County School District is governed by seven trustees elected by the voters of Washoe County. The trustees are deeply committed to the success of the students and staff. While oversight at the state level is necessary and important, decisions about school operations should be handled at the local level. WCSD Trustees endorse:

- Any and all governance or personnel changes to school governance or operations be considered and approved by the local Board of Trustees.
- Any and all necessary reporting on the progress of district efforts to improve student achievement to the Nevada Legislature and/or the State Board of Education and their staff be approved by the local district.
- A fully elected board of trustees.

School Safety

Washoe County School District believes that a working and learning environment that is safe and respectful is essential for

all students and staff to achieve success. The Board of Trustees endorses policies and practices that:

- Promote social and emotional wellbeing of students and staff to prevent bullying and school violence, and foster development of good digital citizenship skills, which are responsibly and appropriately tailored to a K-12 educational setting.
- Ensure that every student has full access to educational services without limitations due to race, gender, gender identity, religion, or disability.
- Promote an environment of mutual respect for all students and staff.
- Provide support for victims, offenders, and witnesses involved in bullying incidents.

School Choice

Washoe County School District is committed to programs that provide academic choices that best prepare students for college and careers. For this reason, WCSD is committed to student options programs which offer specific programs, topics, and distinctive themes that focus on specialized, engaging student learning that includes:

- District sponsored charter schools,
- Industry aligned employment specialties,
- Adult education options and,
- School Within a School (SWAS) programs.

Any effort to expand school choice to private educational institutions must not divert resources from traditional public instruction or preclude any student from his/her constitutional right to a free and equal education.

School Construction Funding

After many years of having insufficient funds to build and repair schools, in November of 2016, Washoe County voters approved a .54% increase to the sales tax in Washoe County to fund building, maintaining and modernizing school facilities. With these new funds and the rollover bond funds made available by the 2015 Legislature, Washoe County School District is embarking on a \$1.1 billion building program through 2025. In order to ensure the best possible use of those funds, Washoe County School District Board of Trustees endorses:

- Extension of the CMAR process to ensure the most efficient use of capital funds.
- Increased coordination with developers to ensure mutually beneficial school siting processes.