

2025 LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES



Our mission is to educate all students, preparing and inspiring them to graduate and seek their full potential as lifelong learners.

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ARLINGTON PUBLIC SCHOOLS

315 N French Avenue

Arlington, WA 98223

360-618-6202

www.asd.wednet.edu



FULLY FUND SPECIAL EDUCATION

APS urges the Legislature to fully fund the cost of special education services. In Arlington, funding received for 2023-24, including Safety Net, did not cover the cost of services requiring more than \$1.4 million dollars from local sources including local levies. To ensure Arlington and other school districts are provided with funding that reflects the actual costs of service delivery, the Legislature must increase special education tiered multipliers and remove the arbitrary funding cap.

FIX THE PUPIL TRANSPORTATION FORMULA

APS urges the Legislature to fix the pupil transportation formula. In Arlington, funding received for 2023-24 did not cover the actual costs of services by more than \$300,000. The Student Transportation Allocation Reporting System (STARS), is not meeting its intent, and is consistently underfunding. The STARS system does not account for geographic characteristics of a district such as bodies of water and mountains that influence the reimbursement rates. In addition, STARS does not accurately account for the actual cost of transporting students experiencing homelessness or receiving support through foster care. It also does not account for support needed for students receiving special education, such as bus monitors to help unload students in wheel chairs. The STARS formula cannot forecast allocations with reliable accuracy, and completing this in February complicates budget decisions for APS and other districts. APS has received a 100% efficiency rating, and this is used against us resulting in less funding.

FIX MSOC UNDERFUNDING

APS urges the Legislature to address the significant underfunding of allocations for Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC). While staffing represents the largest expense for school districts, there are many costs to running a school district which are non-staff related. In Arlington, our insurance costs have more than quadrupled since I arrived as superintendent in 2016. In 2016-17 school year our insurance costs were \$321,234, and are now estimated to be \$1,323,320 for 2024-25. State funding for MSOC has not kept pace with actual costs and requires Arlington to use local levies and other local resources to fill the gap. Costs of food, utilities, insurance and fuel have increased significantly at no fault of the school district, and we cannot operate our district without these.