

# Federal Legislative and Policy Priorities and Issues for Public Education in Washington State – Spring 2025

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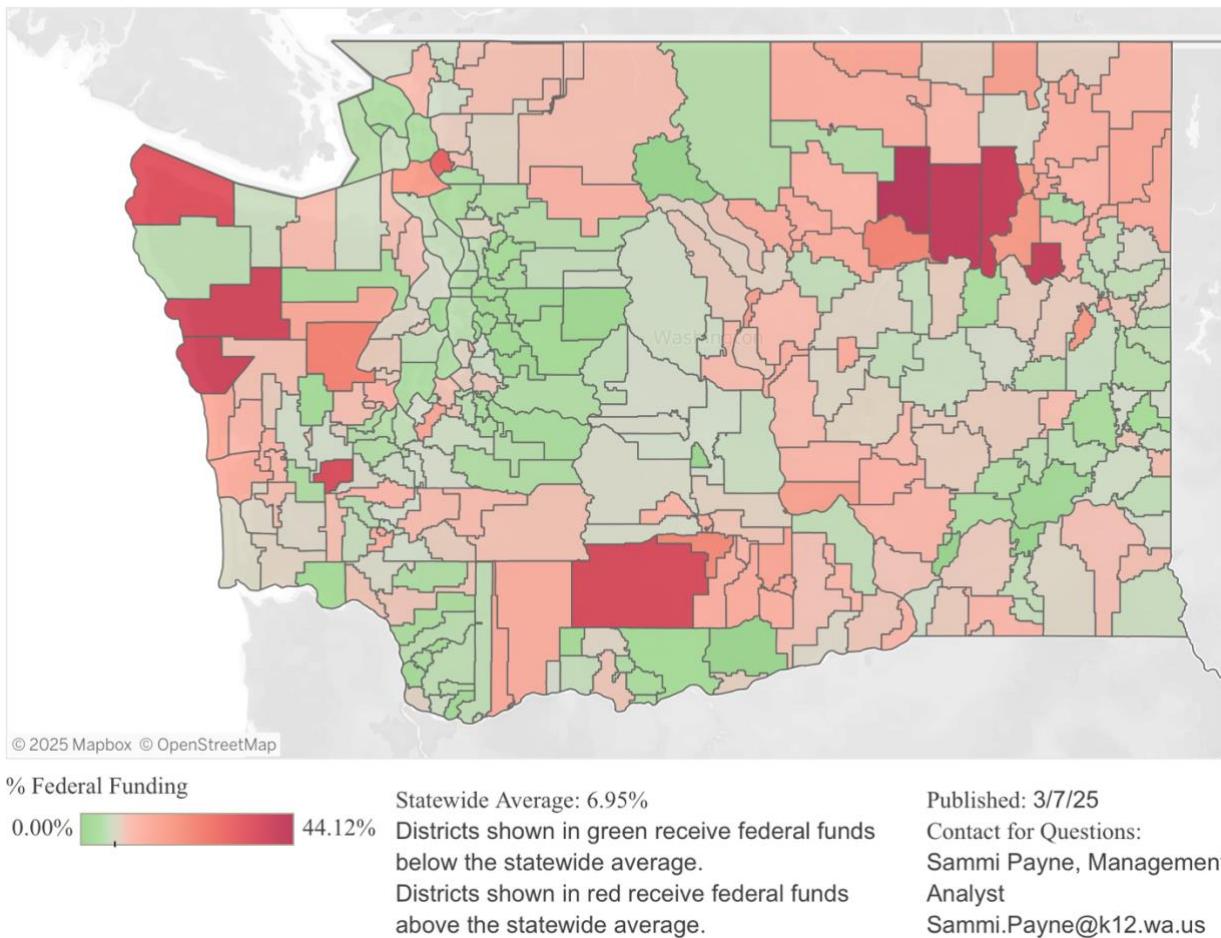
## FUNDING

Federal funding for public education in Washington State averages 6.95% but covers up to 44.12% of operating budgets for school districts, most significantly in communities without local property tax authority (eg. military installations, Indian Trust or Treaty Lands) and with lower incomes.

[Federal Funding data display](#) From OSPI

[Federal Funding by school district 2023-24](#) OSPI

% Federal Funding by School District (2023-24)  
One-Time Federal Emergency Relief Funds Removed



## **Federal Funding comes to School Districts in multiple forms including:**

### **Impact Aid**

- Reimburses school districts for lost revenue from tax-exempt Federal property within their school district boundaries, including military installations, Indian Trust or Treaty Lands, Federal low-income housing, national laboratories
- WA has 44 districts that receive Impact Aid in 8 of 10 Congressional Districts
- WA received over \$87 million in Impact Aid last year
- Impact Aid appropriations have not kept pace with increased costs
- Impact Aid is the only K-12 Federal education program that is not forward-funded, meaning a delay in appropriations has immediate negative impact on recipient school districts and their day-to-day operations
- Impact Aid is disbursed directly to school districts and is locally controlled and flexible, allowing local school districts to target funds to support students wherever there is greatest need
- <https://www.nafisdc.org/impact-aid-resources/about-impact-aid/>

### **Title funding**

- Title 1 funding is critical to urban and rural communities and serving students from low-income families. Title 1 funding ensures equal access to educational opportunity for all children by providing targeted supports and resources
- Title 1 funding is governed by strict guidelines that promote active parent and guardian engagement, a critical factor in improving student outcomes and increasing family involvement in their child's education
- From WSSDA: In Washington State, nearly one-third of public schools receive Title 1 funding, benefitting more than 350,000 students every year and closing the gap between wealthy and low-income communities. Washington State received \$6.5 billion in 2022 in Title 1 funds
- Title II and Title III support academic success through educator support and language and literacy support for students in need
- Please reject proposals to convert Title funds to block grants - block grants for federal funds would weaken federal protections, reduce accountability, reduce education spending and divert resources that target low-income and marginalized students in every state and support equal access to education and opportunity

## **Special Education**

- Federal and state laws mandate services, yet the funding remains insufficient, creating a gap in WA of \$1 billion annually between what districts spend to provide services and what funding is provided from Federal and State sources
- Statewide advocacy has resulted in increased support and investment from our WA legislature, but needs and funding gaps persist and chronic underinvestment harms students and their academic success
- Currently special education in Washington State is funded 8% from federal dollars and 92% state dollars. Local levy funds must be used to cover the gaps, diverting resources that are intended to provide support and enrichment for all students
- The promise of the federal government upon the establishment of IDEA was that 40% of the cost of providing Special Education would come from the US government, the rest to be funded at the state level. IDEA funding from the federal government has since reached 17% at the highest and is currently around only 13%
- From WSSDA [Special Education Resource Map](#)

## **School Nutrition**

- Please reject changes to School Meals eligibility, such as raising the Community Eligibility Program (CEP) participation threshold or increasing income verification requirements – hungry students need less barrier to nutrition, not more
- USDA support could expand farm-to-school initiatives, improving student wellbeing and supporting local WA farmers

## **E-Rate**

- Current FCC rule allows school districts and libraries to use funding to purchase Wi-Fi hotspots to provide internet access to rural, remote, and underserved areas.
- Students and families without internet access are denied full participation and support in public education and family engagement. Please reject the CRA (Congressional Review Act) proposal to eliminate funding support for the FCC rule that allows school districts to provide Wi-Fi hotspots for student internet access

## **Medicaid**

- Reductions to Medicaid will reduce vital health and education services for low-income children and students with disabilities
- School districts use Medicaid reimbursement to provide in-district services to students who qualify – cuts to Medicaid are cuts to K-12. Please reject any cuts to Medicaid.

## **EQUAL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION**

The contributions and benefit of the federal government to K-12 education is more than the amount of funding – the US Department of Education is the backstop that enforces civil rights protections and provides technical assistance to states and districts to meet our nation's commitment to public education for every student. The elimination, dismantling, weakening of the Education Department impacts student civil rights and removes oversight and programs intended to ensure equal rights and opportunities for all children.

Questions related to potential changes in the US Department of Ed:

- What enforcement mechanisms will there be for IEP compliance? Federal law requires that students with disabilities have access to a free and appropriate public education, regardless of the staffing levels of ED. What happens to the ED's Office of Civil Rights? What recourse is there for families if states do not follow the law?
- If Title dollars are converted to block grants, how do we as a nation ensure that low-income and disadvantaged children have equal access to education regardless of where in the country they live?
- What happens to FAFSA? How will it be administered?
- Impact Aid is appropriated by Congress and disbursed by the US Department of Education directly to school districts. How will Impact Aid be distributed with changes being made to ED?
- What will happen to NAEP? How will we know as a nation if students are progressing in reading and math, if our children can compete and participate in local and global economies? What research and information can states rely on to improve their educational programs and services?
- Will states be expected to meet the 95% participation requirement for testing if federal government is no longer distributing funding? And what impact will that have on states' own ability to monitor state progress and student achievement?

Additionally, the Council of Great City Schools, National School Board Association, and National PTA oppose the Educational Choice for Children Act as well as any other federal subsidy or funding proposal supporting private school tuition including vouchers, private school choice demonstrations, education savings accounts, scholarships, tax credits, or other financial arrangements that divert public funds or revenue to private schools, as doing so would enable discrimination against students, undermine local control of education, and damage public schools that educate 90% of American children.