**PSESD Regional Districts Legislative Positions 2020**

**Themes Based on Superintendent Input (October 2019)**

**Update the Prototypical School Funding Model**

The need for student supports in local school districts has grown exponentially, yet the funding ratios for many staff positions in the prototypical school model have not kept up. In particular, schools need additional capacity to hire staff to support the social and emotional needs of students and to engage families in culturally relevant and authentic ways.

Proposed Solution: Phase in updated ratios, considering recommendations from the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup, which was directed by the legislature to decide how to achieve more realistic state-funded staffing levels.

**Special Education Funding**

Prior to the 2019 session, OSPI identified a special education underfunded need of $300-$400 million. The 2019-21 budget provides $80 million -- a much-needed investment in the safety net, yet far from full funding. Small districts, in particular, do not have capacity in their general education budgets to cover these costs.

Proposed Solution: Increase the special education multiplier to make up for the unfunded mandate for school districts.

**Support School Facilities**

Many districts continue to have difficulty passing local requests for, building, and maintaining modern school facilities.

Proposed Solutions: Advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to be approved with a simple majority vote. Additionally, update the construction and space formulas to ensure funding more closely reflects actual costs and educational space needs.

**School Employee Benefit (SEB) Impacts**

The 2019 Legislature took action to fund and ratify the SEB Collective Bargaining Agreement, with the program beginning January 1, 2020. Unfortunately, the costs of the new benefit program and the state funding do not align. As the new insurance program is implemented, adjustments are needed to fund the full costs to school districts.

Proposed Solution: Align SEB policies and related funding including the costs of substitute/part-time employee eligibility and employees that opt-out of coverage.

**Student Safety & Wellness**

In 2019, the Legislature passed HB 1216, a hallmark school safety policy and the first of its kind in Washington state. The bill has formalized a comprehensive statewide, regionally-based delivery model that is coordinated with school staff, mental health practitioners, and other community professionals, such as emergency responders, to better ensure our schools receive timely, relevant and seamless health and safety supports. Although the legislature passed this policy, less than 25% of the activities required by HB 1216 were funded.

Proposed Solution: Fully fund the statewide school safety and student well-being network, regional school safety centers, and statewide support for behavioral health and suicide prevention.