



Washington Office of Superintendent of  
**PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

REPORT TO THE LEGISLATURE

# K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee

*2022*

Authorizing Legislation: [Senate Bill 5092, Sec. 951](#) (2021)

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# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The 2021 Legislature tasked the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with convening a workgroup to develop recommendations to support recruiting and retaining a multicultural and multilingual educator workforce with state salary allocations that are competitive and reflective of current economic conditions. The K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee met from November 2021 through September 2022 and provided their final recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction as required by state law. The Superintendent then streamlined those recommendations into a more targeted budget request. This report includes OSPI’s targeted recommendations, as well as the Committee’s comprehensive recommendations.

# BACKGROUND

State law (Revised Code of Washington [RCW] 28A.150.412) requires the Legislature to review and rebase state basic education compensation allocations every four years. The Legislature is required to review the state allocations compared to school district compensation data, regionalization factors, an inflationary measure most representative of actual market experience for school districts, and other economic information. Based on those findings, the Legislature is required to revise the state's minimum allocations, regionalization factors, and inflationary measure if necessary to ensure state basic education compensation allocations provide market-rate salaries and regionalization factors reflect actual economic differences between school districts.

To support the Legislature's review that is required during the 2023 Legislative Session, the 2021 Legislature (Senate Bill 5092, Sec. 951) tasked the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) with convening a workgroup to develop recommendations to support recruiting and retaining a multicultural and multilingual educator workforce. The workgroup, titled the K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee, was tasked with reporting their recommendations to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent is then required to make "official" recommendations to the Governor and Legislature.

The Committee met 15 times between November 2021 and September 2022. To inform their recommendations, the Committee sought and reviewed verbal and written proposals, as well as presentations by various experts. They also sought and received public comments.

This report includes both the Superintendent's, as well as the Committee's, recommendations.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee's recommendations take a comprehensive approach to addressing inequities in state allocations for educator compensation, and fully implementing their recommendations would require significant new investments by the Legislature.

OSPI has chosen to take a more targeted approach by offering solutions that focus on the core components required to increase student access to a diverse and highly skilled educator workforce. Additionally, OSPI's recommendations concentrate on making necessary adjustments to the compensation structure to address the concerns that school districts have expressed since the 2019–20 school year, when substantial changes to the model went into place.

The Committee's comprehensive recommendations would require new investments by the Legislature totaling \$21.6 billion in the 2023–25 biennium. OSPI's targeted recommendations would require an additional legislative investment of \$3.2 billion for the 2023–25 biennium.

## OSPI Recommendations

OSPI's recommendations for addressing inequities in the state's allocations for educator compensation are provided in detail in the agency's 2023–25 Operating Budget Request titled, [Retaining Highly Effective Staff Through an Equitable and Competitive Educator Compensation Model](#).

At a high level, OSPI's proposal includes the following components:

1. More specifically defining staff types in the salary allocation model to include certificated instructional staff (CIS), non-administrative classified staff (CLS), classified administrative staff (CLS – Admin), and certificated administrative staff (CAS).
2. Increasing base salary allocations by 6% for all three currently defined staff types (CIS, CAS, and CLS) starting in the 2023–24 school year.
3. Establishing a maximum regionalization factor of 12% by reducing all districts currently above 12% downward.
4. After the cap of 12% is established, assigning regionalization factors by county, and all districts within the county will be provided with the same factor as the single highest district within the county.
5. Providing the experience mix factor to any district that has certificated staff with above-average experience or that exceeds the average of certificated staff with advanced degrees.
6. Providing a bonus to all school-based CIS and CAS staff at eligible high poverty schools. After an initial four-year period, current school characteristics will determine continued eligibility for the bonus.
7. Moving from the current inflationary index of IPD (Implicit Price Deflator) to CPI (Consumer Price Index).
8. Establishing a hiring bonus for teachers within a district's special education program providing services to students with disabilities.

9. Beginning to collect data on paraeducator degrees, certification, and experience to determine how the state could provide a differential state salary allocation for districts that exceed the statewide average of paraeducator experience or exceed the statewide average of paraeducator education and certification or both.

Both OSPI and the Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) included additional components of the Committee's recommendations in other agency budget requests.

They are as follows:

1. Fully implement the staffing levels recommended by the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup to be included as part of the program of basic education in RCW 28A.150.260. (See OSPI's budget request: [Increasing Staffing Allocations to Support Stronger, Safer Schools.](#))
2. Increase funding for school substitute employees to better reflect the number of days those substitutes are used in schools based on statewide absence rate data. This funding should also reflect the true costs to hire substitutes based on statewide data. (See OSPI's budget request: [Increasing Staffing Allocations to Support Stronger, Safer Schools.](#))
3. Provide a bilingual proficiency grant that compensates K–12 staff who meet proficiency standards for speaking a language that is spoken or taught to students within their unique communities, including tribal languages. (See OSPI's budget request: [Building a Multiliterate Washington through Statewide Dual Language Education.](#))
4. Provide ample resources for expansion of the First People's Language, Culture, and Oral Traditions teacher certification program between school districts and local tribes. (See OSPI's budget request: [Building a Multiliterate Washington through Statewide Dual Language Education.](#))
5. Revise the student transportation funding allocation model to one that provides more transparency and reliability to ensure every school district and state-tribal education compact school has enough resources to hire and retain bus drivers and other required student transportation staff. (See OSPI's budget request: [Providing for Adequate and Predictable Student Transportation to School.](#))
6. Increase state funding to ensure all school districts and state-tribal education compact schools can hire the staff necessary to provide high-quality services to students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). (See OSPI's budget request: [Fully Funding Special Education Services.](#))
7. Increase supports for beginning educator mentorships to ensure mentors and mentee teachers receive the direct support necessary to ensure beginning educators are successful. (See OSPI's budget request: [Expanding Mentorship and Retention of Beginning Educators.](#))
8. Support mentorship programs for beginning school principals with an emphasis on supporting principals in small, rural school districts and in high poverty schools to increase resiliency and decrease turnover. (See OSPI's budget request: [Strengthening the Pipeline for Effective School Principals.](#))
9. Award bonuses, similar to those for National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT), for certificated instructional staff who do not have access to NBCT by virtue of their job. (See OSPI's budget request: [Strengthening the Pipeline for Effective School Principals.](#))

10. Expand alternative routes and “grow your own” programs to recruit highly effective teachers. (See OSPI’s budget request: [Sustaining a Strong Educator Workforce Through Teacher Residencies](#), as well as PESB’s budget request: [Washington Teacher Academies](#).)
11. Implement a loan deferral program in coordination with existing federal loan programs to reduce or eliminate student debt for K–12 employees. (See PESB’s budget request: [Bilingual Educator Initiative Conditional Loans](#).)

## **Committee Recommendations**

The Committee’s recommendations are included in their full report ([Attachment A](#)).

# **ATTACHMENT A: FULL REPORT BY THE ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

# K-12 BASIC EDUCATION COMPENSATION ADVISORY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

September 2022

## SUMMARY OF RECOMMENDATIONS

The K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee provides the following 14 recommendations to attract and retain a world-class education workforce and support the statutory requirement in 28A.150.412(1) for the legislature to "review and rebase state basic education compensation allocations compared to school district compensation data, regionalization factors, what inflationary measure is the most representative of actual market experience for school districts, and other economic information. The legislature shall revise the minimum allocations, regionalization factors, and inflationary measure if necessary to ensure that state basic education allocations continue to provide market-rate salaries and that regionalization adjustments reflect actual economic differences between school districts." While the committee did not put these recommendations in priority order, the committee believes it is imperative that the legislature thoughtfully consider the impacts of the order in which they implement funding due to the interrelationship of state funding, local levies, and staffing levels.

As the committee considered these recommendations, we concluded that many of the recommendations could be implemented immediately if fully funded by the legislature. For instance, if the legislature chooses to fully fund special education, provides pass-through funding for the recommended bonuses, or implements the grant programs identified, there would be limited impact to local levies and existing staffing levels. But should the legislature increase base compensation, then local school districts may be less able to afford the existing staff they fund through local levies. The committee concluded that increasing salaries and wages at the expense of existing and future staffing positions would be a problematic consequence. Conversely, if the legislature implemented the recommended staffing levels over the next biennium and then adjusted salary levels, then the pressure of funding the salary changes would be borne primarily by the state instead of increasing pressure on local levies.

It is for this reason that the committee strongly recommends the legislature implement recommendation 7a (Full implementation of the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup recommendations) prior to implementing recommendation 1 (increasing state base salary allocations). Both are critical elements, but how the legislature phases in these recommendations are equally important.

Absent from these recommendations are any changes to collective bargaining laws or statutory requirements. The committee does not make any recommendations related to expanding or restricting collective bargaining rights as it was not seen as within the parameters of the committee's work.

- 1) Increase state salary allocations for K–12 staff based on comparable job classifications in the state. The committee recommends state average salary allocations in the 2023–24 school year should be:
  - a) K–12 certificated instructional staff.....98,000
  - b) K–12 classified staff.....70,000
  - c) K–12 classified administrative staff.....150,500
  - d) K–12 certificated administrative staff.....150,500
- 2) State salary allocations should be adjusted upwards based on relative average annual salary levels in each of the state's metropolitan and non-metropolitan statistical areas as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). These areas should be grouped into five tiers.
- 3) State salary allocations should be adjusted annually each September 1, using the Consumer Price Index (CPI) for all urban consumers, Seattle area.

- 4) State salary allocations for certificated instructional staff should be adjusted upwards for districts that exceed the statewide average of certificated staff experience or exceed the statewide average of certificated staff advanced degrees, or both.
- 5) The Student Transportation funding allocation system should be changed to provide more transparency and reliability, to ensure every school district and state-tribal education compact school has enough resources to hire and retain bus drivers and other required student transportation staff.
- 6) Bonuses for school staff to include the following:
  - a) Provide state bonuses to all school-based staff who work in high poverty schools and state-tribal education compact schools.
  - b) Provide an initial hiring and ongoing retention bonuses to all school-based staff who work in rural schools and rural state-tribal education compact schools.
  - c) Provide a special education hiring and retention bonus grant that provides funding for an initial hiring bonus and ongoing retention bonuses at the completion of every three years of service provided the employee remains in a special education role.
  - d) Provide a bilingual proficiency grant that compensates K–12 staff who meet proficiency standards for speaking a language that is spoken or taught to students within their unique communities, including tribal languages.
  - e) Award bonuses, similar to National Board Certified Teachers (NBCT), for certificated instructional staff who do not have access to NBCT by virtue of their job classification.
- 7) Address the following staffing and workload issues:
  - a) Fully implement the staffing levels recommended by the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup to be included as part of the program of basic education in 28A.150.260.
  - b) Increase funding for school substitute employees to better reflect the number of days that substitutes are used in schools based on statewide absence rate data. This funding should also reflect the true costs to hire substitutes based on statewide data.
  - c) Increase the state funding amount to ensure all school districts and state-tribal education compact schools can hire the staff necessary for services to students eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).
  - d) Implement a more robust system to determine fiscal impacts of proposed legislation and ensure that the local costs of new programs and requirements are addressed through direct funding to school districts and state-tribal education compact schools.
- 8) The committee recommends funding for mentor programs to support beginning educators, including certificated staff, paraeducators, bus drivers, and principals. Specifically, the committee recommends:
  - a) Provide funding through mentor program grants, similar to the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program, be more targeted in terms of the use of funds to ensure mentors and mentee teachers receive the direct support necessary to ensure beginning educators are successful.
  - b) Provide funding for a paraeducator mentor program, similar to BEST, to ensure paraeducators that provide direct instruction to students in the classroom under the supervision of a certificated staff member receive support from a mentor during their first three years in the classroom.

- c) Create a grant program to support a mentoring program for bus drivers separate from the student transportation allocation model.
  - d) Include school principal mentoring programs in state funding with an emphasis on supporting school principals in small, rural school districts and in high poverty schools to increase resiliency and decrease turnover.
- 9) Expand alternative routes and “grow your own” programs.
  - 10) Significantly increase investments and efforts in cultivating more native educators in Washington schools.
  - 11) Implement a loan deferral program in coordination with existing federal loan programs to reduce or eliminate student debt for K–12 employees.
  - 12) Establish a grant program that provides funding to rural, remote school districts and state-tribal education compact schools that can demonstrate and provide evidence that local housing shortages have impacted their ability to attract and retain staff.
  - 13) Invest in statewide recruitment systems for educators:
    - a) Implement a single statewide standard application
    - b) Implement a statewide educator recruitment campaign for all K–12 school districts
  - 14) The state should provide ample resources for expansion of the First People’s Language, cultural and oral tribal traditions teacher certification program between school districts and local tribes.

## BACKGROUND

The McCleary v. State of Washington Supreme Court Decision confirmed that Article IX, Section 1, “confers on children in Washington a positive constitutional right to an amply funded education.” Many constitutional rights are negative in their orientation, “framed as negative restrictions on government action.” Conversely, a positive constitutional right, like the right of children within Washington State to receive an amply funded education, uses a different lens “where the court is concerned not with whether the State has done too much, but with whether the State has done enough. Positive constitutional rights do not restrain government action; they require it.”

To address the McCleary decision, the legislature enacted a series of laws over the past decade and invested billions of additional state resources into the K–12 education system. Among the changes, the legislature increased state funding for salaries and changed the structure of local levies. These changes did result in a significant increase in certificated staff salaries in the state, but arguably did little to address the reliance on local levies for the costs of basic education. In addition, the changes also created situations where neighboring school districts have different access to basic education resources due to the funding models used. In short, many school districts believe the current system is more inequitable and provides less funding than necessary to meet the needs of students than past state funding models.

In response to the McCleary decision in 2017, EHB 2242 was enacted requiring the legislature to review and rebase state basic education compensation allocations compared to school district compensation data, regionalization factors, what inflationary measure is the most representative of actual market experience for school districts, and other economic information. The legislation also requires the legislature to revise the minimum allocations, regionalization factors, and inflationary measure if necessary to ensure that state basic education allocations continue to provide market-rate salaries and that regionalization adjustments reflect actual economic differences between school districts.

In preparation for this review, additional Legislation passed in 2021 directs the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to convene a K–12 Basic Education Compensation Advisory Committee to develop recommendations to the Governor and the legislature that supports recruiting and retaining a multicultural and multilingual educator workforce.

Specifically, the committee was charged with developing recommendations for:

- 1) Compensation updates to the K–12 basic education salaries
- 2) Updates to regionalization data and mitigate boundary effects of regionalization policies
- 3) Adjustments to inflationary factors
- 4) Analysis of and strategies to address workforce needs
- 5) Compensation adjustments to support equity
- 6) Compensation to recruit and retain a more diverse workforce

This authorizing legislation can be read in its entirety in [Section 951 of ESSB 5092](#), and requires the committee to report its recommendations for salary rebase and compensation adjustments to the Superintendent of Public Instruction. The Superintendent shall make official recommendations to the Governor and the fiscal committees of the legislature by September 30, 2022.

This report is intended to provide the Superintendent, Governor, and the committees of the legislature with recommendations that provide ample funding for K–12 educator salaries and remedy some of the inequities and consequences created by legislation and budgets enacted to address the McCleary decision.

#### Authorizing Legislation

- [Senate Bill 5092—Session Law/Operating Budget Section 951](#)
- [RCW 28A.150.412](#)
- [RCW 28A.150.260](#)
- [RCW 28A.150.410](#)

#### Committee Members

Name	School District/Agency	Nominating Organization	Representing Position on Committee
Brandy Strait	Kennewick School District	Public School Employees (PSE)	Classified Staff
Cindy Kelly	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Washington State Native American Education Advisory Committee	Tribal Representative
Denise Reddinger	Richland School District	Washington Education Association (WEA)	Teachers/Educational Staff Associates
Kaylynn Stewart	Mt. Vernon School District	Washington Education Association (WEA)	Teachers/Educational Staff Associates

<b>Name</b>	<b>School District/Agency</b>	<b>Nominating Organization</b>	<b>Representing Position on Committee</b>
Keri Hutchins	Mead School District	Washington School Personnel Association	District Human Resources
Lyn Nakashima	North Thurston Public Schools	Public School Employees (PSE)	Classified Staff
Michelle Scott	Battle Ground Public Schools	Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO)	School Business Officer
Naila Prieto-Duval	Granger School District	Public School Employees (PSE)	Classified Staff
Nancy Chamberlain	Washington State Parent Teacher Association	Washington State Parent Teacher Association	Parent
Shawn Brehm	Wellpinit School District	Washington Education Association (WEA)	Teachers/Educational Staff Associates
Shawn Lewis	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction	Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI)	Designated Committee Chair
Shreya Shaji	Northshore School District	Legislative Youth Advisory Council	Student
Tom Seigel	Bethel School District	Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA)	School Administrator

**SPECIFIC RECOMMENDATIONS**

1. Adjust salary allocations for K–12 education every four years based on similar job market data provided by the Employment Security Department. Salary allocations should be provided separately for each of the following classifications:

- K–12 certificated instructional staff
- K–12 classified staff
- K–12 classified administrative staff
- K–12 certificated administrative staff

This recommendation disaggregates administrative classified staff from classified staff to increase the transparency of funding that is provided for classified staff within the K–12 education system.

The committee reviewed data based on the latest published data from the Employment Security Department website and estimates that statewide average allocation amounts in the 2023–24 school year, after regionalization, for each of the classifications above would be approximately:

- K–12 certificated instructional staff.....98,000
- K–12 classified staff.....70,000
- K–12 classified administrative staff.....150,500
- K–12 certificated administrative staff.....150,500

The committee recommends that the legislature engage the Employment Security Department or other research bodies to conduct additional analysis of the jobs and job types that should be included in the comparable wage analysis. While the committee believes these amounts are reasonable estimates of appropriate allocations based on our analysis and a review of actual salaries paid in school districts, they also recognize that additional data and analysis to support these amounts - and the creation of a replicable model for future year - would be helpful to ensure the legislature and OSPI could conduct this analysis on a regular basis to determine if salaries are keeping pace with comparable jobs and job types.

All allocations are based on a full-time equivalent (FTE) employee. For certificated instructional staff, an FTE is defined based on the state required school year and professional development time required as part of additional state days. For all other staff, the allocation is based on 2080 hours.

Many school districts already pay these average salaries in order to attract and retain the existing workforce. The additional allocation in those districts would reduce the reliance on local levies for basic education salaries and would assist in attracting and retaining a multicultural, multilingual workforce.

The following chart shows a comparison of the current allocations, current projected base salary levels, and the recommended allocations based on the current labor market (increased by 5.5% for 2022–23 and 2.0% for 2023–24 to adjust for inflation):

	<b>2022–23 Base Allocations</b>	<b>2022–23 Projected Average Base Salaries</b>	<b>2023–24 Committee Recommended Base State Allocations</b>
K–12 certificated instructional staff	\$72,728	\$86,606*	\$86,000
K–12 classified staff	\$52,173	\$66,392	\$61,500
K–12 classified administrative staff	\$52,173	\$122,039	\$132,000
K–12 certificated administrative staff	\$107,955	\$164,929	\$132,000

	<b>2022–23 Average Allocations after Regionalization<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>2022–23 Projected Average Total Salaries</b>	<b>2023–24 Committee Recommended Average Allocations after Regionalization</b>
K–12 certificated instructional staff	\$79,274	\$95,346	\$98,000
K–12 classified staff	\$56,869	\$67,363	\$70,000
K–12 classified administrative staff	\$56,869	\$124,280	\$150,500
K–12 certificated administrative staff	\$117,671	\$169,948	\$150,500

<sup>1</sup>Regionalization based on school year 2021–22 statewide average

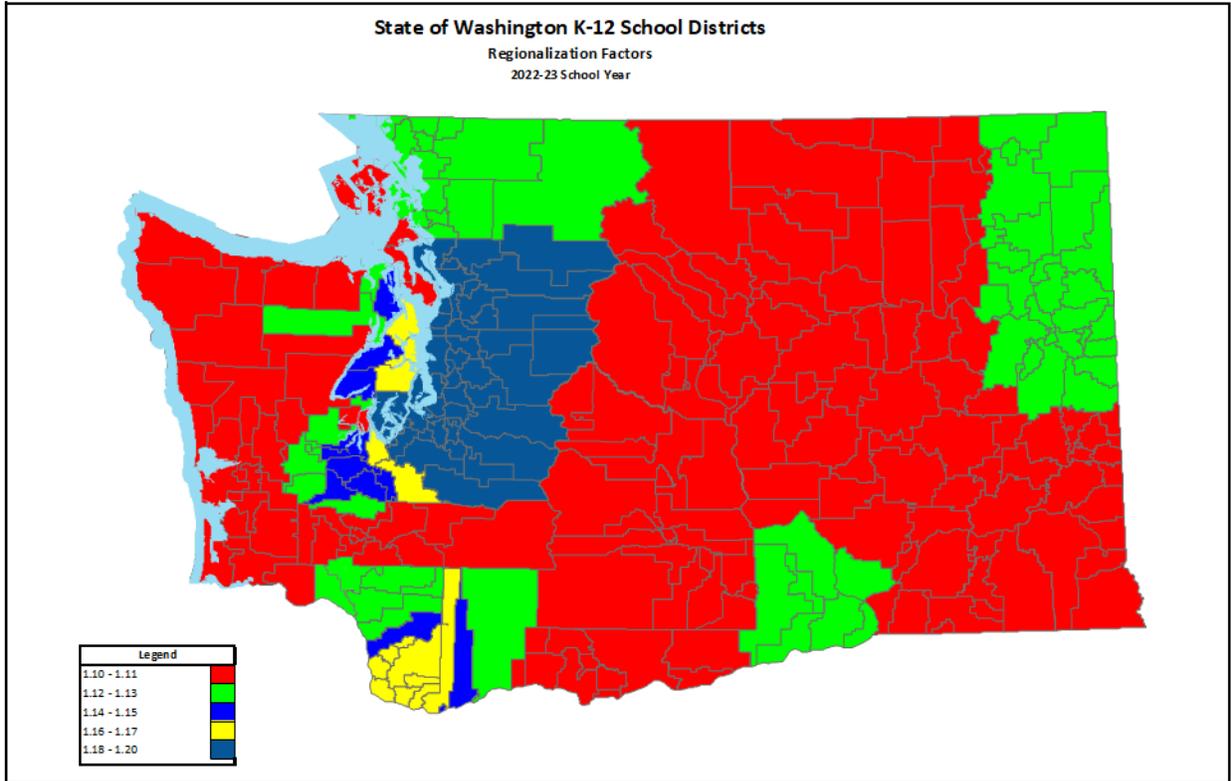
2. State salary allocations should be adjusted upwards based on relative average annual salary levels in each of the state’s metropolitan and non-metropolitan statistical areas as published by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS). [See the Bureau of Labor Statistics Analysis here](#). These areas should be grouped into five tiers. This upwards adjustment would be equal to:

- 10% for areas that are identified to be in tier 1
- 12% for areas in tier 2
- 14% for areas in tier 3
- 16% for areas in tier 4
- 18% for areas in tier 5

When a school district shares a boundary with another school district with a higher regionalization factor, the differential between the two regionalization factors must not be greater than two percentage points and the district with the lower factor will be increased to the tier necessary to implement this requirement, except for districts that share a boundary but are separated by the Cascade Mountains.

No district should experience a funding reduction for state funded salaries in any year during the transition to these new regionalization factors. In accordance with [RCW 28A.150.412\(4\)](#), “No district may receive less state funding for the minimum state salary allocation as compared to its prior school year salary allocation as a result of adjustments that reflect updated regionalized salaries”. [See regionalization detail by district here](#).

The regionalization factors using 2022 data and the criteria above are shown on this map:



These new regionalization factors largely address the inequities that were created during the transition to the current regionalization model. By using the metropolitan and non-metropolitan labor market data by region and ensuring that neighboring districts receive no greater than a 2% difference in regionalization, districts will continue to be able to address different costs of living due to housing, but also remain competitive for educators in a region and across the state.

While the committee believes the recommended regionalization model is a substantial improvement to the model currently in place, there may be situations where the model does not align perfectly with the intended policy. For instance, school districts in the San Juan Islands have expressed that the BLS data does not accurately reflect their labor market and additional data should be gathered to provide their districts with an appropriate regional adjustment. For these types of situations, the committee recommends that an appeal process be available for districts to submit additional data and information to OSPI along with a requested remedy to address any model deficiency.

After analyzing and discussing a variety of models to address the cost of living and hedonic wages, the committee felt strongly that the regional labor market method best met the needs of school districts to attract and retain a quality workforce within its geographical area.

Using these regionalization factors identified above, the following table shows the allocations districts would receive in each tier based on the average salary allocation recommendation provided by the committee:

	<b>Certificated Instructional</b>	<b>Classified</b>	<b>Administrative</b>
State base allocation:	\$86,000	\$61,500	\$132,000
Tier 1 (10% regionalization):	\$94,600	\$67,650	\$145,200

	<b>Certificated Instructional</b>	<b>Classified</b>	<b>Administrative</b>
Tier 2 (12% regionalization):	\$96,320	\$68,880	\$147,840
Tier 3 (14% regionalization):	\$98,040	\$70,110	\$150,480
Tier 4 (16% regionalization):	\$99,760	\$71,340	\$153,120
Tier 5 (18% regionalization):	\$101,480	\$75,570	\$155,760

3. State salary allocation should be adjusted annually each September 1, using the CPI for all urban consumers, Seattle area for the most recent 12-month period ending prior to the last Washington State Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC) Quarterly Report typically issued in February. For instance, for the 2022–23 school year, the CPI-Seattle 12-month increase would be used as reported in January 2022 and reflected in the ERFC Quarterly Report issued in February 2022. This allows the legislature to utilize the latest available data to inform their final budget.

The committee analyzed several options regarding inflation adjustments and felt strongly that the inflation adjustment used should be targeted to ensure K–12 employee salaries kept pace with the costs of consumer goods and to ensure employees’ purchasing power remained consistent. The committee affirmed that Implicit Price Deflator, the broader measure that is currently in place, and adjustments based on average wages in the state were both inappropriate factors to use when considering salary adjustments to address inflation.

4. State salary allocations for certificated instructional staff should be adjusted upwards for districts that exceed the statewide average of certificated staff experience or exceed the statewide average of certificated staff advanced degrees, or both.

The committee considered multiple ways to address this adjustment, including returning to a salary allocation model that existed prior to implementing the current model, and determined that the language found in House Bill 1419 from the 2021–22 legislative session was the most appropriate solution.

[House Bill 1419](#) develops a salary allocation model that more closely matches the salaries of the teachers who are hired by school districts. To accomplish this, each district would continue to annually report the experience and education of their teaching staff. State funding would be allocated accordingly to keep up with the increasing costs of a stable teaching force as they gain experience or attain additional education or degrees across their career and avoid creating disincentives that prevent districts from hiring the best teacher, while simultaneously meeting state expectations for class size.

The committee also strongly recommends the state begin collecting data on paraeducator degrees, certification, and experience to determine how the state could provide state salary allocation adjustments for districts that exceed the statewide average of paraeducator experience or exceed the statewide average of paraeducator education and certification, or both.

5. The Student Transportation funding allocation system should be changed to provide more transparency and reliability to ensure school districts and state-tribal education compact schools are provided with the resources necessary to pay bus drivers and other transportation related staff positions with market level wages. When a new allocation system is developed, any salary allocations for K–12 transportation staff, or factors related to transportation staff, should be adjusted every four

years based on similar job market data provided by the Employment Security Department. Salary allocations should be provided separately for each of the following classifications:

- K–12 bus drivers
- K–12 non-supervisory transportation staff
- K–12 supervisory transportation staff

The allocation system should also provide specific funding to allow school districts to pay for Commercial Driver’s License (CDL) training and the time for new drivers from their date of hire and throughout their training prior to the first day of school. This would increase the allocation by 5% for all new drivers hired for each school district.

6. Additional bonuses beyond the basic state salary allocations were considered by the committee to address a variety of student needs. The committee recommends the state provide any bonuses as part of a direct grant that clarifies the specific use of the bonuses. After considering all the various options, the committee recommends the following bonuses as the highest priority for funding:

- a. Annual \$7,500 state bonuses should be provided to K–12 certificated instructional school-based staff who work in high poverty schools, defined as 50% or more students qualifying for free and reduced-price lunch (FRPL). Certificated administrative school-based staff who work in high poverty schools should receive an annual state bonus of \$12,500. Classified staff working in these schools should be provided a \$5,000 bonus annually. These bonuses should be provided to all K–12 certificated instructional staff and allocated in a manner consistent with the existing National Board Certified Teacher (NBCT) stipends. OSPI should create rules to implement these bonuses to address part-time or partial school year staff. While these new bonuses would replace the supplementary \$5,000 bonus for NBCT certificated staff working in high poverty schools, all NBCT staff would continue to receive the base NBCT bonus which they would otherwise qualify for under existing law and associated rules.
- b. The state should provide a rural school district and rural state-tribal education compact school hiring and retention bonus grant that is provided to certificated instructional and administrative staff for an initial hiring bonus of \$10,000 and at the completion of every three years of service within that district another \$15,000 retention bonus. Classified staff should be provided an initial hiring bonus of \$7,000 and \$10,500 retention bonuses at the completion of every three years of service in the district or state-tribal education compact school. Individual employees may only receive the hiring bonus one time during their career. For purposes of this bonus, the committee considered rural school districts/rural state-tribal education compact schools to be those that had a relatively small population size (second class school districts) that served areas that had a low population density, with demographic characteristics that include lower average wages, and generally less access to choose services, such as medical services and shopping.
- c. The state should provide a special education hiring and retention bonus grant that provides funding for an initial hiring bonus of \$10,000 and at the completion of every three years of service within that district another \$15,000 retention bonus, provided the employee remains in a special education role. Individual employees may only receive the hiring bonus one time during their career.
- d. The state should provide a bilingual proficiency grant that compensates K–12 staff who meet proficiency standards for speaking a language that is spoken or taught to students within their

unique communities. The amount of the award should be determined based on the individual needs of the community as documented in the grant application submitted. State-tribal education compact schools and school districts that teach native languages are eligible for these grants.

- e. The state should award bonuses, similar to NBCT, for certificated instructional staff who do not have access to NBCT by virtue of their job classification. This would include, but not be limited to, occupational therapists, school nurses, speech language pathologists, and school psychologists. OSPI should confirm that the certification processes are as rigorous as the NBCT process and, if so, the bonus amount and application/approval process should be consistent with the NBCT bonuses.

For all bonuses, the committee believes OSPI should develop the implementation process to ensure existing staff have immediate access to bonuses they qualify for. For instance, all staff who have worked in special education or in rural districts for the previous three years should have immediate access to the \$15,000 retention bonus in the year of implementation.

7. The committee identified employee workload and working conditions as a major factor in attracting and retaining K–12 employees. In addition, the committee believes strongly that the state’s failure to amply fund all the staff necessary to provide a quality education creates and exacerbates system inequities, leads to over-reliance on local levies, and creates funding issues when districts address salary needs of staff funded by the local levy. If the state fails to make progress on this recommendation, the committee is concerned that school districts will not be able to meet the needs of students consistent with their affirmative constitutional right.

Specifically, the committee recommends the state:

- a. Fully implement the staffing levels recommended by the Staffing Enrichment Workgroup to be included as part of the program of basic education in 28A.150.260. Their report was provided to the legislature in 2019. While progress has been made by the legislature, additional investments are necessary to address the workload issues that may be impacting retention rates in school districts. These staffing levels should be phased in beginning with the schools that serve the largest percentage of their populations experiencing poverty and homelessness.
- b. Increase funding amounts for school-based substitutes based on statewide absence rate data. This funding should also reflect the true costs to hire substitutes based on statewide data. The underfunding of substitute costs has impacted the availability of substitutes in the system overall. School districts and state-tribal education compact schools have resorted to utilizing existing staff to cover employee absences, which both increases workload and impacts student learning significantly. School districts and state-tribal education compact schools should receive funding to cover 12 absences for all school-based staff who must be replaced by a substitute when they are absent at a dollar value that is consistent with the actual costs of substitutes including benefits.
- c. Increase funding to ensure school districts and state-tribal education compact schools can provide staff to meet the service needs for all students eligible under IDEA, to ultimately decrease workload for special education staff. While salaries may address the need to attract employees into special education programs, the committee believes an improvement in working conditions and decrease in caseloads is critical to address employee retention in the program.

- d. Implement a more robust system to determine fiscal impacts of proposed legislation and ensure that the local costs of new programs and requirements are addressed through direct funding to school districts and state-tribal education compact schools. The committee believes that increasing demands from legislation, with no additional funding for staff, contributes to staff burnout and decreased retention rates in the K–12 labor market.

8. The committee recommends funding for mentor programs to support beginning educators throughout their first three years in the profession, with specific emphasis on funding new or expanded programs that provide support for multicultural or multilingual beginning educators. Specifically, the committee also recommends:

- a. Funding provided through mentor program grants, similar to the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program, be more targeted in terms of the use of funds to ensure mentors and mentee teachers receive the direct support necessary to ensure beginning educators are successful. This could include a list of specifically allowable costs, a list of specifically unallowable costs, or a restriction on the percentage or amount of indirect costs or district level costs that could be charged to these grants.
- b. The state should provide funding for a paraeducator mentor program, similar to BEST, to ensure paraeducators that provide direct instruction to students in the classroom under the supervision of a certificated staff member receive support from a mentor during their first three years in the classroom.
- c. The state should create a grant program to support a mentoring program for bus drivers separate from the student transportation allocation model. The purpose of this program is to support bus drivers through the initial training process and provide support through their first three years as a bus driver. This training and support would include cultural competency training consistent to that provided to other staff that connect with students every school day.
- d. School principal mentoring programs should be included in state funding with an emphasis on supporting school principals in small, rural school districts and in high poverty schools to increase resiliency and decrease turnover.

9. The committee recommends expansion of alternative routes and “grow your own” programs, focusing on the following groups:

- a. Classified employees currently working within a school system should be provided an alternative route to certification. This target group has historically been more diverse and reflective of the student population within each school district. The committee recommends the state fund at least one staff position in each educational service district that would lead an alternative route program emphasizing a more multicultural, multilingual workforce.
- b. In cooperation with Washington state community and technical colleges, and/or universities, the state should create an "extension office" where potential education candidates entering K–12 from other industries or professions with work experience would be provided an alternative route to certification. This should exist in every county or region to ensure all candidates have access to information and specific programs and help to enter certificated fields.
- c. The state should provide funding for an alternative pathway and/or a professional residency program for substitute educators and those working with emergency certification, including

additional direct funding for the educator, to complete a certification course of study and meet all current certification requirements.

- d. Current high school students should be provided opportunities to participate in Career and Technical Education or other programs that would allow students with an articulated program that allow them to seamlessly move from high school to college and then to work in the education system, preferably in their own community. Regional programs should be developed for use in small and rural schools and communities where there may not be enough students to create separate programs. State-tribal education compact schools should receive targeted funds to start or expand these programs.

Each of these areas should have specific outreach components targeted to assist potential candidates who are black, indigenous, and people of color (BIPOC), bilingual, or otherwise create a more multicultural, multilingual workforce to enter education fields.

10. The committee recommends the state significantly increase its investments and efforts in cultivating more native educators in Washington school districts and state-tribal education compact schools. The data provided to the committee regarding the number of native educator candidates entering education preparatory programs was shocking and clearly indicates the need for new and expanded programs that encourage native students to enter education preparatory programs and support them through their first three years in the profession and beyond.

11. The committee explored student loan forgiveness programs as a component to the K–12 compensation system and concluded that the state should identify gaps that exist in current federal loan forgiveness programs for K–12 employees, and target additional loan forgiveness programs to individuals who work in rural and or high poverty schools. The committee recommends the state consider a program where loans are deferred for ten years with a portion (20%) of the loan forgiven in each year beginning in year 6 through 10. These years do not have to be consecutive for employees who are on approved paid or unpaid leave from a school district.

12. The state should establish a grant program that provides funding to remote, rural school districts or state-tribal education compact schools that can demonstrate and provide evidence that local housing shortages have impacted their ability to attract and retain staff. Qualifying districts would receive grants that would specify the funding received could be used solely for housing or commuting allowance costs for staff. This may include acquiring short or medium-term temporary housing for beginning or relocating educators to these districts. This would allow the district to be more competitive in the local labor market.

13. The state should create central systems that support education hiring authorities to attract a multicultural, multilingual workforce. The committee believes that a statewide system that could be accessed by all 295 school districts and the seven state-tribal education compact schools, would eliminate or mitigate barriers that may be faced by candidates in trying to find and apply for jobs in remote or rural school districts. The committee believes the state should consider implementing:

- a. A single statewide standard application for all K–12 school districts. Once selected for an interview, candidates may be required by the school district to submit additional information. The standard application could streamline the process for individual candidates in applying to

more rural and remote districts. It could also eliminate some bias in the process if the applications were created with an equity lens in mind.

- b. A statewide recruitment campaign should be implemented that would include information about the education workforce, pay and benefits, types of jobs, where job openings exist, mentoring programs, loan forgiveness programs, and other information that would attract more multilingual, multicultural candidates to enter education programs, including alternative routes to certification, or apply directly for education related jobs.

14. The state should provide ample resources for expansion of the First People's Language, cultural and oral tribal traditions teacher certification program between school districts and local tribes. This would include both funding and technical support and assistance on authentic consultations with local tribes.

## APPENDICES

### Appendix A—Call for Proposals and Public Comments

The committee sought verbal and written proposals to consider as part of their work to advise the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the Governor, and the Legislature. The committee also went out for public comments to review and guide final recommendations. All proposals and public comments received can be found at the [K–12 Basic Education Compensation webpage](#).

### Appendix B—Salary Allocations Detail

The salary allocations detail report is posted on the [salary allocation portion of the K–12 Basic Education Compensation webpage](#).

### Appendix C—Projected Costs of Committee Recommendations

The projected costs of the committee recommendations is posted on the [projected costs portion of K–12 Basic Education Compensation webpage](#).

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