

Relief for Families, Results for Schools: A Middle-Class Prosperity Proposal

Background

Washington state is facing a persistent budget shortfall, and lawmakers have committed to raising state revenue through a fairer tax code. As the state's paramount duty, lawmakers should focus the new revenue first and foremost on basic education and on opportunities for young people.

A Middle-Class Prosperity Vision

Washington has a long and proud history of investing in programs and services that reinforce our values. Prioritize affordability for taxpayers and create opportunities for our children by:

- ✓ Cut state property taxes paid by homeowners (\$1.4 billion annually),
- ✓ Fully fund and expand basic K–12 education (\$861 million annually),
- ✓ Covering the costs of all dual credit instructional fees (\$57 million annually), and
- ✓ Provide two years of college tuition for free (\$760 million annually).

Basic K–12 Education Must be Fully Funded and Expanded

While the Legislature made significant investments in K–12 education following the *McCleary* decision, schools have lost ground over time and are now consistently funding portions of basic education with local revenues. A portion of the new funds generated should close these gaps, ensuring the state continues to meet its *McCleary* obligation, by adding:

- \$306 million for special education,
- \$150 million for universal school meals,
- \$147 million for materials, supplies, and operating costs (MSOC),
- \$114.3 million for student transportation,
- \$90 million for additional substitute days for teachers,
- \$36.4 million for the Learning Assistance Program (LAP),
- \$12.8 million for the Transitional Bilingual Instructional Program (TBIP), and
- \$4.8 million for the Highly Capable program.

College Completion Should be Funded with Free Dual Credit and Two Years of Free College

Washington state has a goal of 70% of the state's 25- to 44-year-olds obtaining a credential beyond high school, and the state is 8% away from meeting its goal. Cost remains the largest barrier to college enrollment and completion, and students and families are taking on unprecedented debt. In addition, over a million Washingtonians have some college credit with no degree or credential. By covering the costs of instructional fees in dual credit programs, as well as tuition for two years of college, the state has an opportunity to lead the country in college access and prepare a highly skilled future workforce.

Tax Reform Should Focus on Affordability for Families

In Washington, the middle class bears the brunt of the state's tax policy failures. From 2013 to 2023, the average Washingtonian's income increased by just 37% while median home prices increased by 139% ([Economic Trends, Washington State Office of Financial Management](#)). Currently, the average Washington homeowner pays roughly \$1,310 annually in state property taxes. This proposal would provide a property tax break for homeowners, saving the average homeowner \$640 each year ([Property Tax Residential Values by County, Washington State Department of Revenue](#)).

