



LEAGUE OF  
EDUCATION  
VOTERS  
FOUNDATION™

**2018–2019**  
**ANNUAL REPORT**



*Preschool student at South Shore PK-8*



*Students at Summit Atlas charter public school*

## LETTER FROM OUR INTERIM CEO

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

We are pleased to bring you our 2018-19 Annual Report and delighted to share League of Education Voters Foundation's (LEV) ongoing work to champion a fair, equitable, and strong education system for Washington's learners. Only with support from partners like you can we continue to push for a financially healthy education system statewide that benefits all kids, so they can achieve the career path of their dreams.



Education investment continues to be an issue that is front and center with our state's policymakers, occupying much of the debate over the past two legislative sessions and focus at the district level, which you will see in our report's policy issue focus. While significant increases in state investment have occurred as a result of the *McCleary* case, additional work is needed — and we at LEV will continue to champion state investments that recognize the state's obligation to meet student needs, regardless of where students live and who they are. For instance, the *Investing in Student Potential* coalition that we co-launched this year works to recognize and appropriately fund special education for 155,000 students in all local education agencies (school districts, charter public schools, and tribal compact schools) across our state. Washington lags national performance in graduation outcomes and exceeds other states in exclusionary practices, despite the potential of these students to achieve college and career goals. Our advocacy (and your support) resulted in a down payment on special education in the 2019 legislative session that will also help to stabilize district budgets.

We also continue to advocate for policies that support students based on their unique educational needs, such as increasing access to behavioral health and other wrap-around supports and pushing for an improved student-targeted educational investment model so that funding follows student needs. We want all students to be successful academically, and we believe that this also means a laser focus on students furthest from opportunity.

Through all of our policy research and advocacy, we work across the educational lifespan, from cradle to career, championing the advocacy of parents of early learners and supporting older students to advocate for themselves. We hope you enjoy reading about one of our education champions featured in this report, Maite Cruz, a tireless and engaged advocate for her community group that highlights the power of student involvement in Pasco, Washington. Maite shares how "For the first time, I realized that my voice could make a difference...I strongly believed that in order for my peers and myself to actually be college ready, we had to score at least a 3. [But] I knew that we were capable of more." Read her full story on page 24.

It has been a pleasure to serve League of Education Voters Foundation as interim Chief Executive Officer as the organization starts a new chapter and to support the organization's mission and values, which are so important to me and to the students and families of Washington.

Sincerely,

**Laura Hitchcock**  
Interim Chief Executive Officer  
League of Education Voters Foundation and League of Education Voters

## LETTER FROM OUR BOARD CHAIR

Greetings,

This has been a year of change at League of Education Voters Foundation with the departure of our long-time CEO Chris Korsmo in October 2018. While change is hard, it can also be a good thing, as many organizations go through life cycle transitions to grow and strengthen their impact. We at LEV remain constant in our commitment to the students of Washington and continue to work to ensure that every student is supported in their pursuit of a high-quality public education. The other constant is our support from you — as advocates, donors, and friends. Thank you for your support of League of Education Voters Foundation and your commitment to all children and students in Washington, from early learning through college and career.



Our work with students, families, educators, community members, and policymakers continues to be inspirational and holistic, as you will see in this report. We are committed to illuminating complex educational topics and policies — from school financing, to social emotional health, to special education, to how local school districts are implementing state policies - through our unique reports and advocacy. We are also working to amplify community voice in both large urban and smaller communities in our approaches to identify needed policy and systems changes that work for students. It humbles me to see our committed staff organizing community meetings, working collaboratively with partners, training young people to advocate for themselves, and meeting with and testifying before the legislature in Olympia. Your continued support makes it possible for LEV to serve as a conduit and champion for education solutions and to partner with policymakers and communities to strengthen education in our state.

Your investments in and support of LEV come at a critical time, as Washington faces unprecedented job opportunities. Yet we also face unresolved gaps in educational outcomes and a need to focus on persistent racial disparities. Like many organizations, we are examining our approaches and strategies to assure that we are intentionally addressing underlying causes of those gaps. Though all answers may not yet be known, we do all agree that work must continue if we are to ensure that Washington's students thrive, with outcomes that are the envy of other states. The LEV Board of Directors has taken the opportunity afforded by change to reflect on our nearly 20-year history, celebrate accomplishments, and look forward to our next chapter. We are excited about the future and bringing on our next CEO to lead League of Education Voters into its third decade. Only together can we bring about the best future for Washington students. Thank you!

Best,

**Betsy Johnson**

Chair, League of Education Voters Foundation and League of Education Voters Board of Directors



*Students at Summit Atlas charter public school*

## OUR VISION

Our vision is that every student in Washington state has access to an excellent public education that provides the opportunity for success.

## OUR VALUES

At League of Education Voters Foundation, we base our work on the following values:

### STUDENTS ARE FIRST

We are focused first and foremost on meeting the needs of all students.

### EQUITY

We believe in an equitable public education system and acknowledge that students have different assets and needs. Every student should get what they need to be successful. Some will need more resources.

### TEACHERS AND LEADERS MATTER

Having quality teachers and leaders positively impacts student outcomes. We endorse quality education, training, support, and evaluation as well as ample, equitable, and stable resources to pay for them.

### FAMILIES ARE IMPORTANT

Family engagement is essential to student success. We seek to partner with families to identify barriers and formulate solutions. We support family outreach programs and work with families to organize themselves to advocate for their children.

### ACCOUNTABILITY

Everybody has to be held accountable — including LEV board and staff, students, teachers, families, legislators, and policymakers. Failing to act, relinquishing responsibility, and blaming others is not acceptable.

### COLLABORATION

We know that we cannot do this work by ourselves; we are most effective when we work with others toward common solutions, when we share credit for accomplishments, and when we focus on our goals.

### NONPARTISAN

Education is not a partisan issue; it is the paramount duty of our state government. Therefore, we are not allied with any political party but are an independent organization that focuses on research-driven practices.



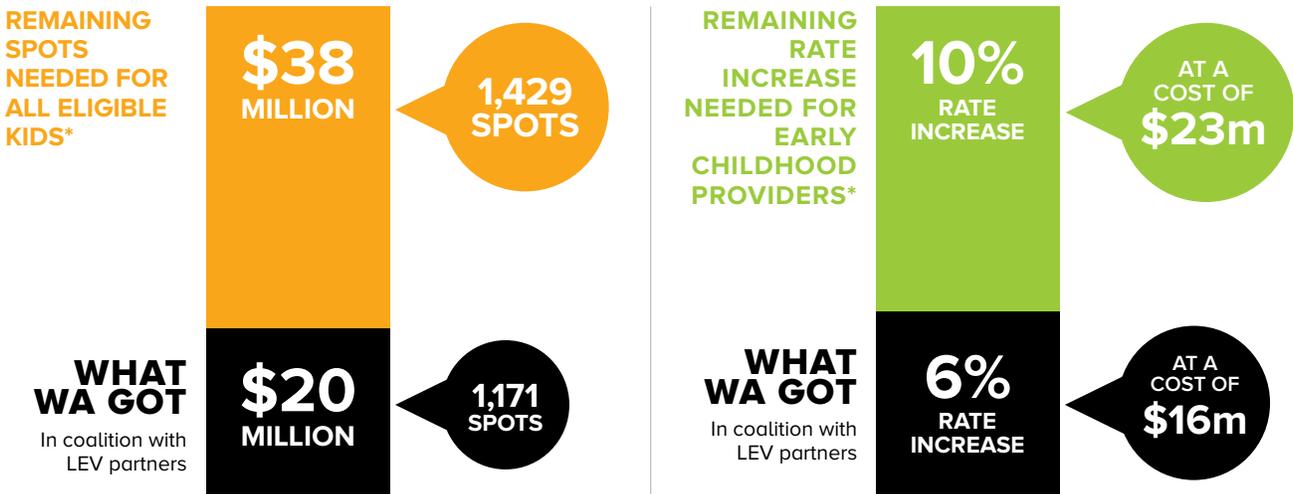
## INTRODUCTION

League of Education Voters Foundation engages in our work in multiple ways — soliciting feedback from communities about their needs, researching best practice and impact of existing policies, providing robust and nuanced information to the public and decision-makers about the issues most impacting students in our system, and working with partners and communities to push for change. Across all of our policy issue areas in 2018–19, showcased in the following pages, we endeavor to create systems that serve and support students furthest from opportunity and most impacted by systems that do not recognize or are not designed to address their needs. Throughout this report, you will see these approaches in our community work, research, and policy advocacy — whether it's through advocating a restructure of our funding systems, increasing access to programs, or rethinking how we design classrooms. In order to do this work authentically and effectively, we are also embarking on our own internal organizational journey around equity, how we engage and walk alongside and with communities and families, and our role in making institutional changes. We are excited about the work we have accomplished together, eager for the work ahead, and happy to reflect on it with you.

## OUR WORK: EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Early learning in and out of the home ensures students arrive at kindergarten ready to learn and thrive. State investments in early learning seek to close opportunity and achievement gaps by focusing on students who may otherwise have limited access to high-quality early learning environments. LEV has supported strong investments in early learning environments for many years based on the research about the links between early learning and kindergarten readiness as a determinant for school success. Over the past several years, our research shows that many families have seen an erosion in their ability to pay for locally-available high-quality childcare programs due to increasing costs. During the past two legislative sessions, we have advocated for the state to close these income-based opportunity gaps by investing more in both Washington’s highly successful state-subsidized preschool program, the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP), and by supporting parents to access other quality early learning settings for children 0-5 years old through increasing state reimbursement rates to childcare providers. We also supported another key program for families — a larger investment in home visiting programs — a research-proven, targeted strategy to increase academic outcomes and decrease the likelihood of child abuse and neglect.

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AND ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (ECEAP)



\*According to the most recent estimates

The legislature did make several important investments in early childhood over the past two years, increasing the reimbursement rate for ECEAP preschool providers and childcare providers that implement Early Achievers (a quality program). They also expanded eligibility for kids experiencing risk factors but above the income eligibility threshold, and launched planning for an earlier (age) start to ECEAP services for low-income kids. Additional funding was also provided to expand access to home visiting services, and the capital budget for 2019-2021 invested over \$30 million for early learning projects across the state.

To support our early childhood education advocacy efforts, LEV published guest blogs by families who benefited from ECEAP, and presented a podcast interview with Heather Moss, Deputy Director of the Washington State Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF). During the 2019 session, LEV early childhood learning supporters sent nearly 1,200 emails to legislators calling out the importance of early education and family support.

### WHAT'S NEXT:

LEV recognizes the importance of high-quality early learning for all children to be ready to enter kindergarten. In 2020, we will continue to support and collaborate with partners across the early learning landscape, working to assure adequate investment in high-quality options for preschool and childcare for children who need access. We will also look for options to support linkages between early learning environments and kindergarten, both at the system and policy levels, and how data and research can support ongoing work. We will continue to work with our community partners across the state and amplify the stories of parents and providers. We believe Washington can and should do more to provide a robust, high-quality system of early learning opportunities for young children as a key strategy to close gaps in educational outcomes.



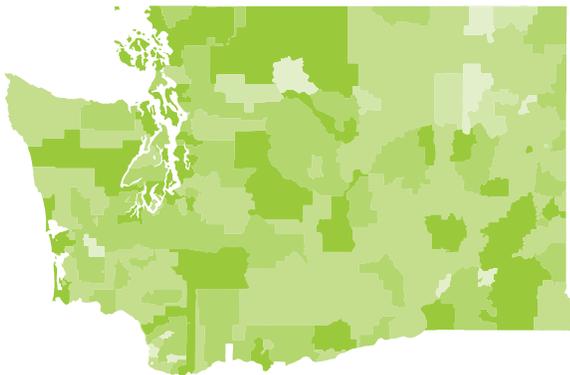
*Preschool students at South Shore PK-8*

## OUR WORK: PAYING FOR K-12 EDUCATION

**A**s a result of the Washington Supreme Court’s *McCleary* case addressing basic education funding, the legislature invested an additional \$8.3 billion in state revenues into K-12 in 2017 and 2018. However, despite progress in the total amount of state money for schools, little progress was made to distribute the money more effectively and equitably, meaning the additional investments may not have the desired impact on improving student outcomes and closing gaps. To address these issues related to strengthening our system, LEV advocated for (1) student-centered funding structures that target resources based on the needs of students, (2) increased transparency on how school districts around the state spend their resources, and (3) fair access to enrichment funds (beyond the state’s required investment in basic education), both for local levy revenues and additional state dollars (local effort assistance) for all local education agencies.

### CONTINUED UNEVEN ACCESS TO RESOURCES IN K12 POST-MCCLEARY

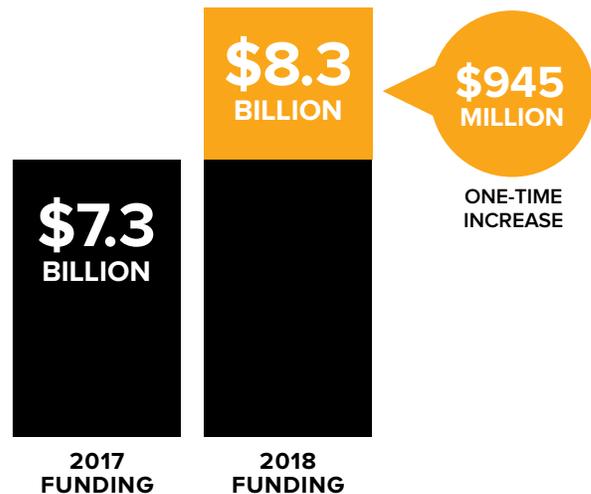
#### 2020 LEVY RESOURCES BY DISTRICT



- \$2,500 or more per student
- \$2,000 – \$2,500 per student
- \$1,500 – \$2,000 per student
- \$1,000 – \$1,500 per student
- Under \$1,000 per student

Includes both local levy property tax revenues and Local Effort Assistance funding for 2020.

#### STATE BASIC EDUCATION FUNDING



Because we believe communities deserve and need full information about how education is funded, LEV utilized interactive maps, produced a Local Levy FAQ, and hosted educational webinars to educate policymakers and communities around Washington on the impact of the funding changes and continued inequities. We also argued our case in editorial board visits and media submissions. During the 2019 session, LEV supporters contributed to our equitable education finance advocacy efforts by sending nearly 500 emails to legislators.

## WASHINGTON'S EDUCATION FUNDING

- Basic education is funded by the state of Washington, as defined by the legislature.
- Additional funding can be levied by school districts to support enrichments to the program of basic education, but not for basic education itself.
- Local Effort Assistance funds are additional dollars provided by the state for districts to supplement levy funds for enrichments in low property value districts.

Though we were disappointed that funding targeted to student needs was not part of the overall funding approach, special education services received a modest fund increase in both 2018 and 2019, which is a partial win and down payment for the 155,000 eligible students. LEV is also glad for required transparency of how state and local dollars are spent at the local level, beginning in the 2019-2020 school year. This additional information will allow families, policymakers, and opinion leaders to determine if resources are getting to students who need it the most. The Legislature in 2019 also ultimately allowed some districts to raise additional levy dollars (reversing its earlier action to limit levies due to the state's duty to fund education), but this still results in unequal access to funding. (Money through levies and state local effort assistance funds are intended for local enrichments, and the unequal property values across the state and a lower cap impacts what some districts can raise.)

### Deep Dive: Fixing McCleary

An analysis on how the legislature's response to the McCleary school funding lawsuit created a different kind of problem for schools.

### Washington lawmakers made 11th-hour changes to school-levy policy, but who benefits?

May 1, 2019 at 5:00 am | Updated May 1, 2019 at 6:27 pm

*LEV Senior Policy Analyst Jacob Vela testifies in Olympia (Courtesy of TVW)*



## WHAT'S NEXT:

With enhanced state investments and formula adjustments that fund education, it is important to fully understand the implications of these investments, including possible unintended consequences and continued inequities. LEV will continue to work toward a transparent system for investments that both direct and track dollars to the student level, and continue to advocate for fully-funded, fair investments across the state. Over the next several years, we expect to monitor investments, seek to understand differences in student outcomes, and work with our partners to champion equity-based investments to meet the specific learning needs of students across Washington. We will do this by putting students in the center of the funding equation.

## OUR WORK: SCHOOL CLIMATE

Students learn most effectively when their schools feel safe, inclusive, supportive, and respectful. Creating positive school climates and providing student supports (caring adults with specialized skills and access to targeted resources that meet students where they are) can mitigate the impacts of trauma, mental health needs, and other non-academic factors that affect a student’s ability to engage in learning. These are instrumental in closing opportunity and achievement gaps and improving student outcomes.

In both the 2018 and 2019 legislative sessions, we advocated for increased support staff such as nurses, counselors, and social workers, training for school staff in social emotional learning (SEL) and addressing trauma, and increased access to student mental health services. In 2019, we advocated for increasing capacity in schools and districts to successfully implement specific strategies to address these needs. We supported protocols and benchmarks that, when fully implemented, will assure that students receive wrap-around supports.

### 2018 AND 2019 SUPPORT STAFF FUNDING

#### WE ADVOCATED FOR ADDITIONAL:



#### WHAT WASHINGTON GOT:



LEV also continued to promote broad public awareness of opportunities to improve school climates through webinars on concrete practices to support students impacted by complex trauma, the proposed state changes to disciplinary rules for schools, and an expert webinar on how to implement mental health supports in schools. Through our field work, we supported the Every Student Counts Alliance (ESCA), a group of advocates, parents, and community leaders seeking to reform school discipline in Spokane, and convened parent training sessions and roundtables where students met with local legislators in the Tri-Cities area. During the 2019 session, LEV supporters contributed to our school climate advocacy efforts by sending nearly 20,000 emails to legislators — the highest engagement of any of our issue areas. LEV also published podcasts on mental and physical health supports for students, Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), and on social emotional learning (SEL).



*Student at Summit Atlas charter public school*

The legislature in 2018 and 2019 discussed a number of proposals to increase supports in schools. These discussions resulted in the creation of a children’s mental health workgroup, a school safety and student well-being workgroup, and the adoption of the Social Emotional Learning benchmarks developed by the state. Unfortunately, the legislature did not fund any staffing level increases in school nurses, counselors, or social workers. However, one of the state-funded professional development days must now be used for training in student well-being related topics, such as trauma-informed instruction, social emotional learning, or mental health first aid.

### **WHAT’S NEXT:**

LEV will continue to support policies and strategies that enhance inclusivity, belonging, and supports for all children, with an eye towards ensuring that children who need more support have access to more support. For LEV in 2020, this means strategically monitoring implementation of the state’s new disciplinary rules to be rolled out in the 2019-20 school year, working with parents, families, and academic leaders to assure that the types of wrap-around supports needed for students experiencing trauma or crisis are in place, and that teachers are equipped with the tools they need to promote positive school climates. It also means monitoring the new workgroups and committees and helping to identify smart solutions that promote student well-being, and continuing to champion policies and approaches, such as a stronger special education system, that will better meet the needs of students in positive school climates.

## OUR WORK: COLLEGE AND CAREER READINESS

A credential after high school — either a certificate, two-year, or four-year degree — will be necessary for 70% of Washington jobs by 2020. In order to prepare students for family-wage jobs, we need to ensure that a high school diploma in Washington is meaningful and robust, and that students in college and on career pathways have the supports necessary to complete their degree or credential. Over the past decade, Washington and other states have enacted policies and practices intended to strengthen student outcomes, both to boost graduation rates, and to assure a strong diploma, including linking passage of the state assessment with graduation. In addition, Washington acted to improve college and career counseling by requiring a ‘High School and Beyond Plan’ for every student, expanding offerings of college credit for certain high school courses (‘dual credit’), and requiring 24 credits to graduate. In 2018 and 2019, we advocated to continue rigorous standards for graduation, as the legislature added alternatives to passing the state assessment. We also conducted research to determine how the policy was impacting different groups of students.

### WHAT IS THE IMPACT OF LINKING GRADUATION TO PASSAGE OF STATE ASSESSMENTS?

In 2018, our Graduation-Linked Assessments report analyzed 15 years of statewide graduation, dropout, and assessment performance data, combined with 70 interview surveys from superintendents, district assessment directors, principals, guidance counselors, teachers, and students.

Our research found that while graduation rates overall have improved, certain student groups need additional supports to achieve the 10th grade standard and have not seen increased graduation rates — findings which were published in the Washington Educational Research Association Journal.

Increasing graduation requirements from 21 to 24 credits aimed to address persistent barriers preventing students from being prepared for success in life after high school. These barriers include not meeting all course requirements for entry into Washington’s four-year public universities, repeating classes at college that could have been taken in high school, and ‘tracking’ of students of color and students from low-income households away from college. Since the 24-credit law is intended to remove barriers to post-secondary education for all Washington students — and only two-thirds of districts are currently implementing it — LEV sought to understand the slow path to full implementation of this policy through targeted research on implementation of the 24-credit diploma.

### WASHINGTON’S 24 CREDIT FRAMEWORK

- Rigorous and flexible
- Enables students to better pursue career paths of their choice
- Seven of 24 credits are flexible (these include four elective credits and three Personalized Pathway Credits chosen by students based on personal interests and their High School and Beyond Plan)
- Students can meet admission requirements of a two- or four- year degree program, apprenticeship, or technical program

## HOW IS THE 24-CREDIT REQUIREMENT BEING IMPLEMENTED IN WA?

LEV interviewed faculty, staff, and students in four (4) districts to learn:

- Why are one-third of districts not on track to meet the 24-credit graduation requirement by 2019?
- For those implementing 24-credits, how did they make changes and what lessons can be identified for other districts?

Our 2019 Case Study report on Implementing Washington's 24-Credit Graduation Requirement gathered insights from districts across the state and provided four snapshots illustrating how schools are meeting the graduation requirement. Our research suggests that our state can do more to support districts and accelerate full implementation of this college-ready requirement and that there are creative and positive examples from which districts/local education agencies can learn, while continuing to assure that all students have the strongest possible foundations in high school. This report is available on our website and has been shared with the Association of Washington School Principals and the WA State Board of Education.

# SPOTLIGHTED DISTRICTS & SCHOOLS

that are meeting the  
24-credit requirement



*Teacher and students at South Shore PK-8*

## OUR WORK: ENSURING ACCESS TO COLLEGE AND CAREER CHOICES

Besides strong foundations, in order to prepare students for family-wage jobs, we need to increase access to, enrollment in, and completion of postsecondary programs — particularly for students who are historically and systemically underserved and underrepresented in our postsecondary institutions. Each of these pieces requires policy and systems supports that are intentional and lift up students to their highest potential. As part of the Washington College Promise Coalition, LEV advocated over the past two years to increase equitable access to higher education by fully funding the Washington College Grant (formerly known as the State Need Grant) for low-income students and continued funding for the College Bound Scholarship, including for non-citizen students with specific immigration statuses. In 2019, LEV supporters contributed to these advocacy efforts by sending nearly 1,800 emails to legislators. Over a two-year period, the legislature acted not only to increase funding for the Washington College Grant but stepped up investments to reach full funding of the grant in the 2020-21 school year so that every income-eligible student will have the support that they need, eliminating the wait-list. This is a huge step forward for Washington’s students, and we thank the legislature for its expanded investment in students’ futures.

### BOOSTING COLLEGE COMPLETION: WASHINGTON COLLEGE GRANT

Formerly known as the State Need Grant

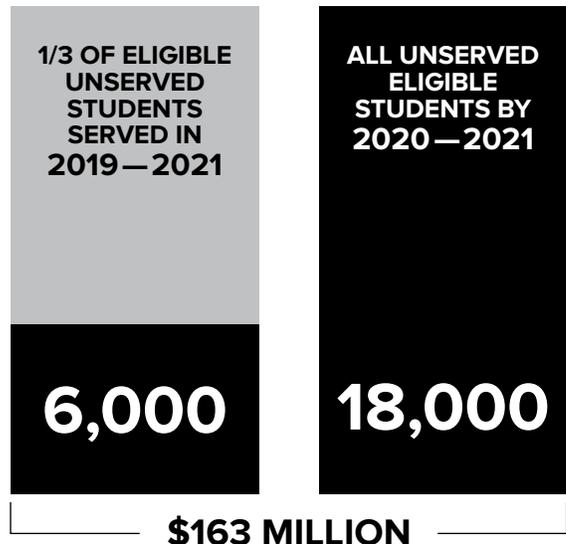
#### NEED\*



\*According to the most recent estimates

#### WHAT WA GOT

In coalition with  
LEV partners



LEV also testified in favor of other supports for college students needing specific assistance to be able to work alongside their classmates, such as subsidized childcare for full-time students. In these ways, we are opening the doors for all students to be able to be successful as they enter the college pathway of their choosing.

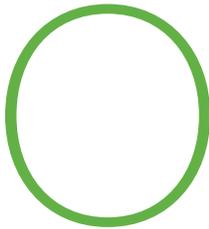
**WHAT'S NEXT:**

Our research focus in 2019 studies how new policies may be helping to close gaps in college and career preparation through adequate planning, information, exposure, and access to needed courses. We are working with districts, parents, and students to understand how the state's High School and Beyond Plan is being implemented, available dual credit opportunities, and career technical education (CTE) options. LEV will pursue potential advocacy that comes out of our research about what districts actually need to implement these policies to ensure that every student has access to all of the academic and preparatory opportunities, regardless of where they live. We also look forward to the incredible boost to our college-going population that the fully funded Washington College Grant will provide.



*Students at Summit Atlas charter public school*

## OUR WORK: SPECIAL EDUCATION



ur current system of providing programming to the 155,000 Washington students requiring special education services is insufficient in both the funding and outcomes for students. Washington lags behind other states in graduation and rates of inclusion for our students, all of whom are capable of advancing in their learning. For the 2019 legislative session, LEV and partners co-launched the *Investing in Student Potential* coalition ([StudentPotential.org](http://StudentPotential.org)) to create comprehensive changes to the funding structures for special education, creating equity for students in small local education agencies (school districts, charter public schools, and tribal compact schools), reducing stigma, and educating and supporting legislators to provide services that promote inclusion and transition.

### SPECIAL EDUCATION FUNDING



\*Conservative estimate

In 2019, we advocated for a state funding system that provides sufficient funds for students with disabilities, improving how we support and prepare educators to better meet the needs of students with disabilities, as well as increasing the accessibility and transparency of information on special education funding, spending, and data (i.e. improved reporting of student outcome data disaggregated by race and/or disability type to better understand how students are being served).

The 2019 legislative session saw the most conversation on special education of any session in recent memory. Legislators exhibited a commitment to addressing the shortfalls in funding and learning about the necessary systems and programming changes to improve outcomes for students receiving special education services. There were a number of proposals and promising conversations about investments in professional development, family advocates, and demonstration sites to implement best practices. While these policy proposals did not make it into any final legislation, the groundwork has been laid for future efforts to create more inclusive schools to better meet the needs

of every student. The legislature increased funding for special education services in both the 2018 and 2019 sessions, and in 2019 made a one-time investment of \$25 million in professional development for educators on inclusive practices.

To support our advocacy efforts, LEV hosted webinars on the special education landscape in Washington and special education from a rural and urban perspective. We also published a podcast featuring Glenna Gallo, Assistant Superintendent of Special Education Services at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI). The *Investing in Student Potential* Advocacy Day brought nearly 150 parents and students from across the state to meet with 47 legislators (more on page 22). During the 2019 session, LEV supporters contributed by sending 1,200 emails to legislators.

### Laura Hitchcock: Education of students with disabilities should not depend upon ZIP code

Tue., April 9, 2019

Opinion

### Here's why Washington must fully fund special education

Originally published January 27, 2019 at 12:01 pm

EDUCATION

### Washington Legislature boosts special education funding, but shortfall remains

The new two-year \$52.4 billion state budget includes a \$155 million increase to special education funding over the next two years.



LEV Director of Policy and Research Julia Warth testifies in Olympia (Courtesy of TVW)

## WHAT'S NEXT:

LEV's work in special education supports the many different individual and organizational advocates who have for decades supported best practices and inclusionary models, recognizing that all students can learn. As we champion an equitable education system, we will continue to support special education funding models, opportunities for professional development, and practices that result in significantly higher gains for all students who are eligible for special education services. Our special education work links with our school climate and education funding work to establish the best possible outcomes for students. Through ongoing work with our partners in the *Investing in Student Potential* coalition, we will design strategic campaigns to elevate and resolve these policy challenges for our state.

## OUR WORK: INCREASING PERSONALIZED LEARNING EXPERIENCES

### LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES OUTSIDE THE SCHOOL DAY AND YEAR

A student doesn't stop learning when the afternoon bell rings — learning needed for college and career preparation happens through activities, interactions, and experiences throughout a student's day. Students need access to high-quality, expanded learning opportunities before and after school, and in the summer, to deepen and enhance their learning in and out of the classroom. These strategies tie to our school climate work, our special education work, funding for K-12 work, and our work on college and career preparation and college access.

In 2018 and 2019, LEV advocated with the Expanded Learning Opportunities (ELO) Network for an additional state \$2M investment in the Expanded Learning Opportunities Quality Initiative that would increase the number of youth who can be served by high-quality programs, along with support for programs in foster care, students experiencing homelessness, or youth involved in the juvenile justice system. We also advocated for the creation of a strategic workgroup to develop a statewide agency coordinating strategy to prevent involvement in these systems as much as possible — through increasing access to known programs that boost youth success. Recognizing the importance of providing career and work-based exploration opportunities for all students, we advocated with the Career Connect Washington Initiative for additional funding for afterschool and summer learning opportunities. LEV supporters contributed to our advocacy efforts by sending nearly 2,000 emails to legislators about the importance of investing in these types of approaches and opportunities.

In both the 2018 and 2019 sessions, the legislature provided \$750,000 to the ELO Quality Initiative for program continuation. No additional funding for career and work-based exploration opportunities was included in the state budget, and the strategic workgroup has not yet been created.

#### WHAT'S NEXT:

We will continue to support strategies that ensure that students have access to high-quality afterschool and summer programming, targeted to students furthest from opportunity.

### SUPPORTING PUBLIC SCHOOL OPTIONS

Some students may need access to different learning environments such as those offered in Washington's charter public schools. Foundations for a strong educational experience recognize that every learner is unique and that we need to meet learners where they are. This approach ties to our special education work and our school climate work.

Washington's charter public schools offer project-based and other learning environments that may work best for some students. LEV continues to advocate for Washington's charter public schools to have access to equitable public financing and to recognize the unique environments that they provide for Washington's public school students.



*Students at Summit Atlas charter public school*

In order for charter public schools to be successful, and since charter public schools cannot access local levy funds, we support access to enrichment funds from the state of Washington so that the schools can continue to support their students and remain financially viable. Charter public schools serve, on average, more students with disabilities and other higher-need students than their surrounding district, so it is vital that they have access to the resources necessary to meet student needs.

### **WHAT'S NEXT:**

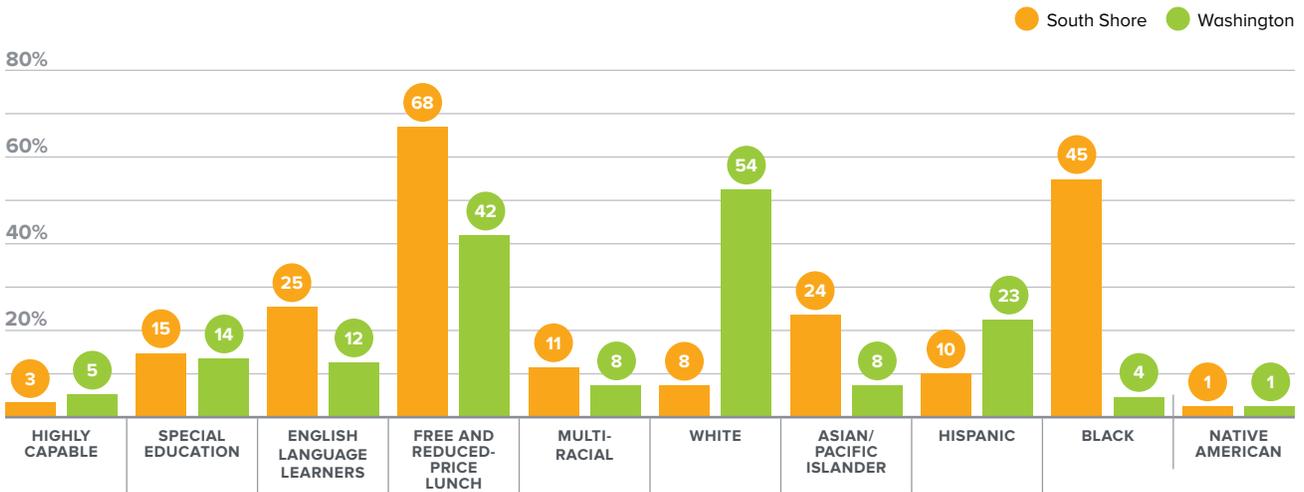
Looking forward, LEV will continue to support strategies that recognize the need to fund charter public schools in an equitable manner to support the public school students whom they serve.

## OUR WORK: SOUTH SHORE PREK-8

Just as League of Education Voters advocates for student-centered policies at the state level to give every student what they need to be successful at school, through our work with the Opportunities for Education Foundation we provide a grant to South Shore Prek-8, located in the heart of Seattle’s Rainier Valley, to implement those same strategies at the local level. South Shore is among the most diverse schools in the state: 45% of students are Black, 24% of students are Asian, 11% of students are two or more races, 10% of students are Latino, 8% of students are White, and 1% of students are Native American. One-quarter of students are English Language Learners (ELL), 9% of students are experiencing homelessness, 68% of students are in low-income families, and 15% of students have disabilities.

The South Shore grant aims to support the well-being and development of every aspect of a child, and therefore touches many parts of the school experience for students. For 2018-19, the major area of investment has been the adoption and implementation of Multi-Tiered Systems of Support, which are specific, personalized interventions based on a student’s unique needs.

### SOUTH SHORE VS. WASHINGTON STATE DEMOGRAPHICS



Aligned with LEV’s advocacy for supportive, safe schools and trauma-informed practice, LEV partially funds a Wellness Team that provides students with reliable and consistent access to mental health services. A full-time clinical specialist is available on-site to children experiencing trauma in their lives in the forms of community violence, housing instability, and family trauma. The team also helps teachers effectively support students with behavioral issues, and over the past two years the out-of-school discipline rate has dropped dramatically from 7.3% to 2.9% as more teachers feel equipped to keep students in class, thus reducing lost learning time.

In the area of high-quality Early Childhood Education, LEV has supported the PreK program at South Shore since 2011, and the South Shore pilot influenced a successful initiative to bring PreK to all Seattle district schools beginning in 2014. The program continues to have strong outcomes. In 2018-19, 87% of South Shore kindergarten students entered school kindergarten-ready, compared to just 82% of students meeting that measure across the district. Considering 90% of kindergarten students attended preschool at South Shore, it's clear that the PreK program should be credited for kindergarten readiness.

### WHAT'S NEXT:

League of Education Voters Foundation continues to support the South Shore PreK-8 school and will be working with the school on several evaluation options to assess program impact during the 2019-2020 school year.



*Preschool students at South Shore PK-8*

## STORIES FROM THE FIELD: INVESTING IN STUDENT POTENTIAL ADVOCACY DAY

The *Investing in Student Potential* coalition ([StudentPotential.org](http://StudentPotential.org)), which LEV co-convened in late 2018, advocates for system and policy reforms for students who require special education services. The coalition's vision is that every individual thrives in a learning-friendly environment where they feel safe, supported, and challenged.

On April 1st, 2019, *Investing in Student Potential* held its first Advocacy Day at the State Capitol. Nearly 150 students and parents from across Washington journeyed to Olympia to meet with legislators, tell their stories, and get involved in the legislative process. Students and parents received training in messaging, advocacy techniques, and best practices for communicating with legislators, along with a presentation by Tania May, Director of Special Education at the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) on the special education landscape and the benefits of including students who receive special education services in general education classrooms.



LEV Spokane Regional Field Director Sandra Jarrard (2nd from left) with Senate Majority Leader Andy Billig and student and parent advocates

Students, parents, and legislators were moved by the experience. One student says, “This was my first time visiting the Capitol. I had a great time, and it was amazing meeting the legislators and talking with them. I told them what IEP (Individualized Education Program) students need, and I think they should have more help on the things they [students who need special education services] don’t understand. Teachers need to help students so they can become someone in life.”

A 14-year-old student from the Tri-Cities says, “What I loved the most was that all these Senators and Representatives listened to us kids about what our teachers, schools, and superintendents need to work on. I believe that if the teacher is not prepared correctly, how are we kids going to do our best to become the future doctors, plumbers, and teachers that we want to be?”

In addition to LEV, *Investing in Student Potential* steering committee member organizations include the Washington State Charter Schools Association, The Arc of King County, Open Doors for Multicultural Families, Roots of Inclusion, and the Rural Alliance. To date, an additional 14 organizations and over 100 individuals have joined the broader coalition.



LEV Director of Policy and Research Julia Warth (right) and Spokane Regional Field Director Sandra Jarrard (2nd from right) with student and parent advocates



LEV Community Organizer Ruvine Jiménez (2nd from right) with student and parent advocates

## EDUCATION ADVOCATE SPOTLIGHT: MAITE CRUZ



**19-year-old Maite Cruz connected with League of Education Voters** while a student at Chiawana High School in Pasco, and is now a freshman at Western Washington University where she is majoring in Political Science with a minor in Spanish and Ethnic Justice Studies. Already she has testified before the state legislature in Olympia, testified before the State Board of Education, and has been a tireless advocate for her community group in Pasco, Ambassadors of Lakeview Achieving Success (ALAS). At Western Washington University, she has worked for REP (Representation & Engagement Program) where she registered her peers to vote and encouraged them to become politically active.

Maite met League of Education Voters Community Organizer Ruvine Jiménez during her freshman year of high school, when she started attending **Pasco Discovery Coalition** meetings. Ruvine showed Maite how she could become a more active advocate for her community and her peers, and guided Maite through the process of organizing community forums. Maite recalls, “Ruvine came to Lakeview, and showed us statistics about my school and how it compares with other schools.”

Maite was struck by the differences between schools from east of the Cascades and schools on the west side. “There are more agricultural workers and more poverty [on the eastside], compared to more businesses and realtors [on the west side],” she says. “Test scores were so different.”

Testifying at a State Board Education meeting in Seattle was a game changer for Maite. She says, “For the first time, I realized that my voice could make a difference. I spoke about standardized tests, because while some believed that students only needed to score a 2 out of 4 on the high school test to be ready for college, I strongly believed that in order for my peers and myself to actually be college ready, we had to score at least a 3. I knew that we were capable of more.” With her powerful testimony, Maite certainly got the attention of the adults in the room.

***“LEV has opened my eyes to the power of the individual — even students like me — to fight for change in education...”***

Maite believes that the purpose of attending elementary, middle, and high school is to become prepared for college. “We need to be ready to take the courses that make us part of the community,” she says.

Maite envisions an education system that is more culturally aware, and more supportive of the challenges students face outside of school. “Some students in my community don’t have heaters or can’t go to sleep for a reason,” she says. “They’ll fall asleep in class because it’s warm. Kids aren’t being rude or disrespectful. Adults in the school building should ask them what’s going on. Students would tell them that it was cold in their house, and that they couldn’t afford to pay for heat or lights, so they didn’t have a heater. And it’s just little things like that. Educators could say, ‘Try not to fall asleep again, and we’ll catch you up.’ That’s something I would change if I had a magic wand.”

When asked why she supports League of Education Voters, Maite says, “We still have so much work to do. LEV has opened my eyes to the power of the individual — even students like me — to fight for change in education, and equity in education. LEV has been there in my corner — believing, as much as I do, in the value of all of the students in our state, and the heights we can reach, with the right tools.”

## DONOR SPOTLIGHT: JANET LEVINGER AND WILL POOLE



**Janet Levinger and Will Poole have supported League of Education Voters** since it was founded in 2001. Janet knew co-founder Lisa Macfarlane and founding board member Steve Miller, and supported their efforts with Initiative 728 in 2000 to reduce class size and to found LEV.

Janet believes that education is the game changer for every individual. “It opens doors and possibilities. It is also essential for a healthy democracy,” she says. “More specifically, we were living in California almost 30 years ago when there was a school bond levy on the ballot in our community. In front of the grocery store, there were people picketing — young parents wanted the levy to pass so there would be good schools for their children. Old retired people did not want their taxes raised. I was incensed. In this country, we have an assumed contract that each generation pays for the next generation’s education. And those older people were breaking that contract. What’s more, those older people not only had their and their children’s education paid for, but they were of the age that they probably went to college on the GI bill. I was angry that the system was so broken. And I felt that no one was speaking up for the children. I decided that I would be the voice for the children.”

***“We need to make sure that what happens in the classroom is compelling and relevant to kids today...”***

When Janet and Will moved to the Seattle area, Janet threw herself into education advocacy. She started volunteering for the Bellevue Schools Foundation, joined the board of Child Care Resources to focus on a strong early learning system, and she soon supported LEV as well as other organizations.

Will believes that if you want to educate the population, you have to do it through the public system to hit scale. He says, “Sadly, public education in Washington state, like many other states, has been under-delivering for our families. We look to change that.”

Janet served on the LEV board of directors for several terms and is now on the board of Seattle Foundation, where she chairs the Community Impact Committee and the Marketing-Development Committee. She also serves on the King County Children and Youth Advisory Board which, amongst other things, oversees the Best Starts for Kids Levy. Finally, she is on the board for the University of Washington College of Education and serves as the Ambassador for a program called Unite:ED, which connects UW faculty with school districts and nonprofits so their research aligns with the needs in the community. She also started a blog about board service: [LeadingWell.org](http://LeadingWell.org).

Will co-founded a global investment firm called Capria ([Capria.vc](http://Capria.vc)) that looks to deliver positive social impact as well as profits in emerging markets. He says, “We invest in education, financial services, health care, and other areas that are highly scalable, profitable, and impactful.”

When asked what she would change in education, Janet observes that everyone seems to want a silver bullet, but there is not one solution to improve our education system. “We need to do many things,” she says. “First, it needs to be well-funded with money for students with all different needs. Second, we need to make sure that what happens in the classroom is compelling and relevant to kids today. Equity is super important. Some kids have more needs — either because of learning differences, because of trauma in their lives, or other reasons. These kids need more resources, top-quality teachers who believe in them, and social-emotional support as well as academic support. Unfortunately, often the less-prepared teachers are sent into these situations — and it’s not fair to these kids.”

## **CONCLUSION: JOIN US & CONTINUE THE JOURNEY TOWARD EXCELLENT EDUCATION FOR WASHINGTON'S STUDENTS**

As we have done for years, LEV will continue to support a rigorous program of instruction that supports access to college and post-secondary training. We will also advocate for students at all levels who need more support to have more support, so that we continue to work toward closing the gaps. We will continue to support strategies that expand access to high-quality early learning and expanded learning environments. And we look forward to seeing more students attend college under the state's new investment in the Washington College Grant. We will continue our research on implementation of these strategies, identifying opportunities to close gaps in access, so that students of every race, gender, income, zip code, and ability can fulfill their dreams. We need your support more than ever so that every student has positive learning environments, support, and a plan, and can work toward fulfilling their dreams. Please join us, and thank you for reading our report!



*Students at South Shore PK-8*

## ABOUT LEAGUE OF EDUCATION VOTERS FOUNDATION

League of Education Voters Foundation is a 501(c)3 charitable organization that provides strategic, accurate, and timely information about research-driven education policies and practices to citizens, educators, policymakers, and the media. We partner with community-based organizations to support parents and community members in improving public education systems in their communities and across the state.

Our programs include coalition building, grassroots organizing, training, policy research, and analysis. We work to improve opportunities for every public school student in the state, and especially for students and families who are historically and systemically underserved and disproportionately affected by failing systems.

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## 2018 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

### TOTAL ALL FUNDS

2018

#### EARNED REVENUE

Foundation & nonprofit grants	\$	3,970,448
Individual contributions		67,352
Corporate contributions		48,095
Events, net of expenses		57,373
Other		1,623

**Total Earned Revenue** **\$ 4,144,891**

#### EXPENSES

Management and general	\$	216,225
Fundraising		219,602
Direct program		1,378,569
South Shore School		929,448

**Total Expenses** **\$ 2,743,844**

**TOTAL CHANGE TO RESERVES\*** **\$ 1,401,047**

#### BALANCE SHEET

Total assets	\$	3,237,234
Total liabilities		393,495

**Net Assets** **\$ 2,843,739**

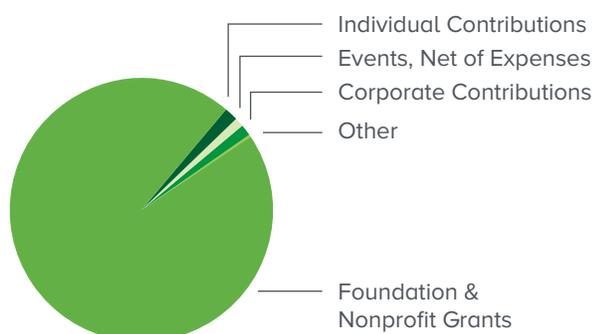
#### LIQUIDITY

Cash & investments**	\$	1,392,544
Unrestricted net assets	\$	972,047
Board operating reserve	\$	350,150

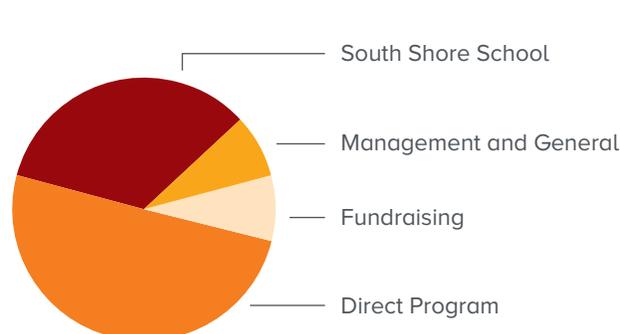
\* Foundation grants include \$1.2 M, restricted for future years

\*\* Includes Board Reserve

### FOUNDATION INCOME



### FOUNDATION EXPENSES



## OUR IMPACT

### FOUNDING

**2001:** League of Education Voters Founded

### EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

#1491

**1,600**  
CHILDREN

**2013:** League of Education Voters helped pass House Bill 1723, which expanded the state Early Childhood Education Assistance Program (ECEAP) and the use of the Washington Inventory of Kindergarten Readiness (WAKids) for 14,500 low-income children to attend high-quality preschool.

**2015:** League of Education Voters helped pass the Early Start Act (House Bill 1491), which increased access to high-quality ECEAP early learning for 1,600 children and dramatically increased the quality and viability of our childcare system.



**1,520**

2018-2019  
SEATTLE PRE-K  
ENROLLMENT  
(PROJECTED)

**2018+:** League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Seattle's citywide preschool program.

**2019:** League of Education Voters successfully advocated for 1,171 spots in the Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) and a 6% state reimbursement rate increase for childcare providers.

### K-12 FUNDING

#728

**\$500**  
PER PUPIL

**2000:** Founders of League of Education Voters work to pass Initiative 728, which brings nearly \$500 per pupil into every school across Washington state.

**2007:** League of Education Voters helped pass House Joint Resolution 4204, an initiative that amended the state constitution to allow a simple majority of voters to authorize local school district levies. \$9.8 billion in local school district funding would not have passed as of February 2018 without this bill. This includes maintenance and operations, transportation, and capital (predominately tech) levies.

#4204

**\$9.8**  
BILLION

**2009:** League of Education Voters led the advocacy to pass House Bills 2261 and 2776, which defined basic education. These are the laws on which the Washington Supreme Court's *McCleary* education funding decision was based.

**2010:** League of Education Voters was the lead plaintiff in the successful effort to overturn Initiative 1053, the initiative requiring two-thirds legislative approval to raise revenue or close tax loopholes.

#1053

**2/3**  
OVERTURNED

**2017:** League of Education Voters led advocacy efforts through the Campaign for Student Success to drive \$8.3 billion of state money into our education system to address the Washington Supreme Court's 2012 *McCleary* ruling.

## K-12 FUNDING

**2019:** League of Education Voters successfully advocated for a state budget increase of \$63 million annually for special education in 2019-2021.

## STUDENT SUPPORTS

3,400

ENROLLED IN CHARTER PUBLIC SCHOOLS

18 AUTHORIZED CHARTER SCHOOLS

13 OPERATING CHARTER SCHOOLS

1 TO OPEN FALL OF 2019

4 TO OPEN FALL OF 2020

50

SCHOOLS NOW USING THE RULER SEL CURRICULUM IN SEATTLE, FIRST ADOPTED AT SOUTH SHORE

**2012:** League of Education Voters was the key driver in passing Initiative 1240, which created Washington’s charter public school system.

**2016:** League of Education Voters worked with the Senate Education Chair to help pass the Opportunity Gap Bill (House Bill 1541), in which students will no longer be suspended or expelled for discretionary offenses, and better statewide data on student demographics will ensure that the system is working to keep all students on track and in school.

**2016:** League of Education Voters helped pass Senate Bill 6194, which saved Washington’s charter public schools. The new charter public school law increases accountability while still allowing flexibility and innovation to address student needs.

**2018+:** League of Education Voters work at South Shore PreK-8 led to Multi-Tiered System of Supports (MTSS) teams in every Seattle school.

**MTSS in Seattle Public Schools Year One (2016–17) Highlights:**

Developed an MTSS Team in every school that meets regularly to review data and make decisions; continued the Positive Behavior Interventions and Supports (PBIS) school discipline program in more than 45 schools.

**2019:** League of Education Voters 2019 successfully advocated for a one-time special education investment of \$25 million in professional development for educators on inclusive practices.

## POST SECONDARY

#6523

REAL HOPE ACT

**2007:** League of Education Voters helped pass and protect the College Bound Scholarship to provide state financial aid to low-income students who may not consider college a possibility due to the cost.

**2014:** League of Education Voters helped pass the REAL Hope Act (Senate Bill 6523, our state’s version of the Dream Act), allowing qualified undocumented students to apply for federal student aid and participate in the State Need Grant. An additional \$5 million was apportioned for 2014-2015 to serve newly eligible Dreamers.

#2158

WASH. COLLEGE GRANT

**2019:** League of Education Voters worked with partners to help pass the Workforce Education Investment Act (House Bill 2158), which fully funds the State Need Grant, now renamed the Washington College Grant, in the 2020-2021 school year — meaning that every eligible student will have access to the funding they need to access postsecondary opportunities.

## ABOUT LEAGUE OF EDUCATION VOTERS

Working closely with League of Education Voters Foundation, a separate advocacy arm was formed in 2001. League of Education Voters is a non-partisan 501(c)4 organization that partners with parents, students, and civic leaders to advocate for a high-quality public education system in Washington state. League of Education Voters works as an advocacy organization also statewide to improve public education from early learning through higher education, and to ensure ample, equitable, and stable funding.

Working on behalf of students, League of Education Voters has successfully led the charge on many of the landmark funding and policy decisions helping to improve the education landscape in Washington.

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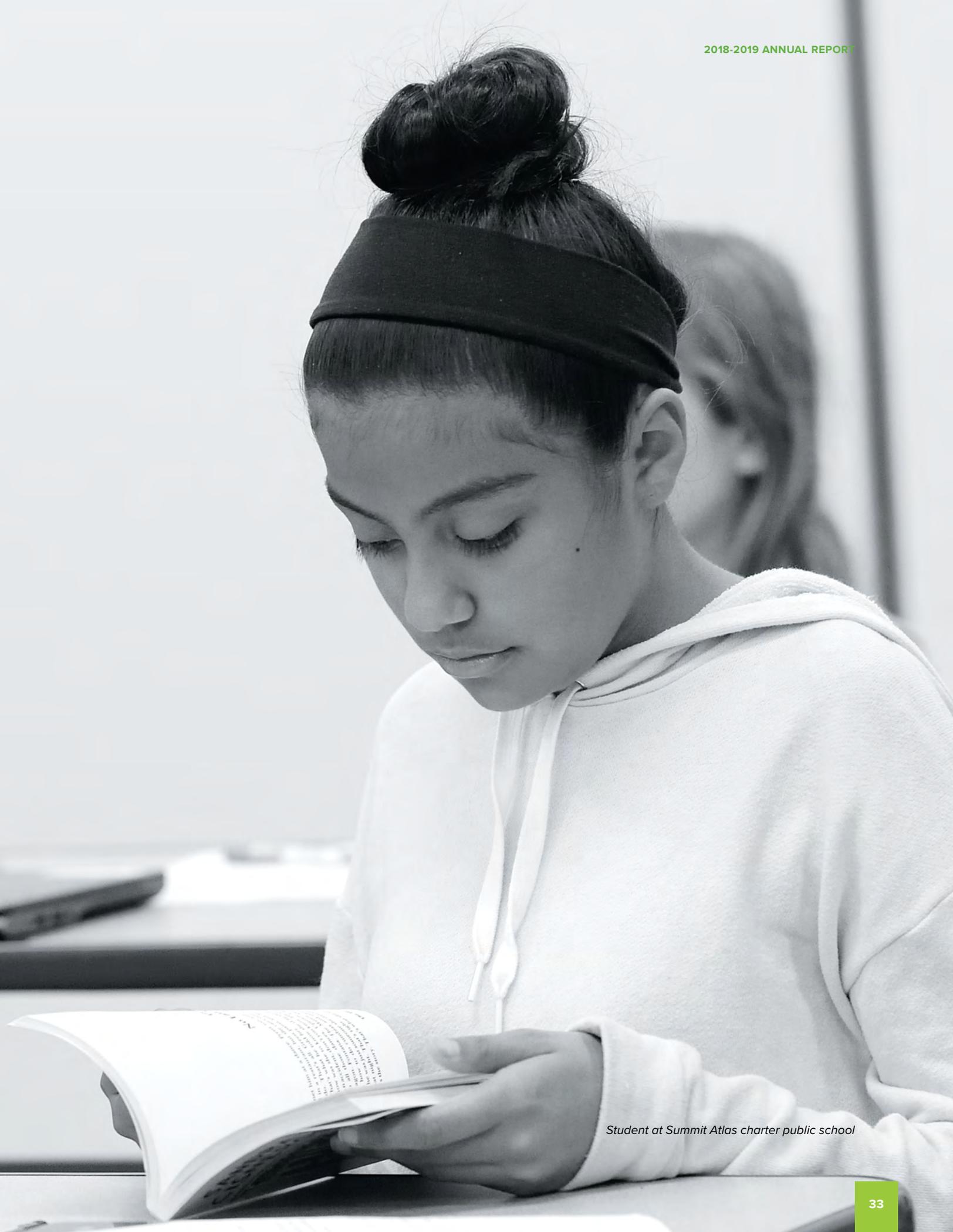
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\*Served partial year



*Student at Summit Atlas charter public school*



*Preschool students at South Shore PK-8*



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