



2021 Issue Paper: Public Education

Priority Statement

The priority for public education is to ensure the state fully funds K-12 public education and increases funding for student support services.

The [LWVWA Program in Action 2019-2021](#) holds the following positions on K-12 public education:

- The state is responsible for determining uniform educational standards and for providing ample and equal opportunity for education. (K-12 – 1)
- The state is responsible for amply funding both education and the social services needed to ensure that every child, regardless of race, color, gender, national origin, age, sexual orientation, or disability, is ready to learn and safe in their schools. (K-12 – 2)
- Citizen participation should be encouraged at all levels. (K-12 - 8)

During the 2021 legislative session the League will be advocating for full funding for special education, increased funding for student support staff (nurses, counselors, social workers, etc.), and closing the digital opportunity gap by supporting broadband access.

We will also be watching for bills tied to the Washington State Charter School Commission's legislative agenda to amend the Charter School Act (RCW 28A.710) to allow more time to establish charter schools. Current law states that a maximum of 40 charter schools may be established over the five-year period commencing with April 3, 2016. That five-year period ends April 2021. Since charter schools were first authorized, five have closed, two were investigated for violating special education laws, and one is being required to file annual reports on its financial viability. Of the five that have closed, four were awarded grants of over \$1 million from the federal charter schools program, according to the Network for Public Education. We have been unable to find out how much total state funding went to these closed schools. All still are governed by a board appointed by a corporation, not by a public election.

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