

Washington's Paramount Duty Candidate Questionnaire - 2018

Washington's Paramount Duty is a group of parents, teachers, and community members who fight to ensure our state's public schools are fully and equitably funded. We are asking all candidates for the state legislature in 2018, regardless of party, to respond to the following questionnaire. These responses will be made public and shared with our more than 7,000 members across the state.

There are 12 short questions below. You must give an answer for the questions themselves, and following each question is space for you to expand on your yes/no/maybe answers should you wish to do so. We will publish those additional comments along with your answers to the questions themselves.

Email address *

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Candidate Name

Gael Tarleton

1) Do you believe our public schools are amply funded right now, as is required by the state constitution? *

Yes

No

Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 1)

The State Supreme Court concluded that the legislature had met the obligation to fully fund our K-12 schools to resolve the McCleary court case. But that is not how I measure meeting our paramount duty to amply fund our schools. We must revise the teacher compensation methodology. We must fund school construction to meet the lower class sizes for K-12, not just K-3. We must fund more special needs educators, mental health counselors, and nurses in our schools. And we still haven't figured out how to ensure the state is funding these basic education costs with stable and predictable sources of revenue. We are never done when it comes to funding public education.

2) Will you vote for new, progressive revenues to sustainably fund our public schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 2)

I will vote for a capital gains tax. I will explore how we might create a dedicated source of revenue for K-12 public schools, similar to a public utility tax. We have to get creative. I support a complete restructuring of Washington's tax code so that we have a fair tax system that includes an income tax, significant reductions in sales and property taxes, elimination of the B&O tax (which depresses job growth and suppresses local economic development), and substantial excise taxes on alcohol, tobacco, firearms, marijuana products, and e-cigarette and vaping products. But that's going to take a while, and in the meantime, our public K-12, early learning, and higher ed institutions need more money now.

3) Will you vote for these specific revenues? *

Capital gains tax

Closing corporate tax loopholes

Other:

I want to explore creating the equivalent of a public utility tax to provide dedicated funding to our K-12 schools.

(Additional comments for question 3)

4) Will you vote to prevent \$1.1 billion in school cuts caused by the January 1, 2019 levy cliff? *

Yes

No

Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 4)

I will take votes that protect the \$1.1 billion in revenue and that fund additional needs in the K-12 system.

5) Will you vote to change the 2017 education funding deal (HB 2242) and add more funding to eliminate inequities between districts as well as ensure districts have the money they actually need to give every child a great education? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 5)

Please see my responses to the first question, where I articulate the specific areas of increased funding support required.

6) Will you vote to fully implement Initiative 1351, which creates smaller class sizes and increases in counselors, nurses, teaching assistants, librarians, and social workers, and in particular, with additional class-size reductions and staffing increases in high-poverty schools? More info: <http://leg.wa.gov/House/Committees/OPRGeneral/Documents/2014/I-1351Summary.pdf> *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 6)

I voted for I-1351. I have continued to vote for implementing I-1351 as passed by the voters, and I have opposed proposals to amend I-1351.

7) An OSPI survey of school districts found state funding for special education remains more than \$100 million short after the 2018 legislative session. Will you vote to fully fund special education? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 7)

Fully funding special education resources that follow the child -wherever the child is in the K-12 public school system - is a top priority. I have several family members who needed special education resources throughout their K-12 years and in Massachusetts, those resources have been available. I have a sister and brother in law who formed a non-profit in 1989 to specifically support schools, families, and communities by designing special education curricula and providing counseling services tailored to the needs of students and families. I have learned from my family members and friends that continuity, consistency, and stability are absolutely critical if children with special learning needs are going to be able to succeed in school.

8) Would you support financial incentives to reduce school segregation (racial and economic)? *

- Yes (explain below what incentives you would support)
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 8)

I do not know what this means. I've not heard of the idea of giving "financial incentives" to reduce segregation in schools. My instincts tell me that this is not a good way to motivate integration. If we want to reduce segregation, we must use policy levers that diversify student populations, connect parents to schools where their children can learn, improve teacher/counselor resources, and other methods. In general, I do not support using money to motivate more fair and equitable social policies.

9) Do you support a simple majority for school bonds and school levies? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 9)

I always have and always will.

10) Do you support school vouchers or other programs that allow public funding to follow a student to a private and/or charter school? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 10)

I do not support school voucher programs. I do not support public education funding being diverted to private schools. Our State Supreme Court has directed that the legislature fund charter schools. If the Seattle School District decides to establish charter schools that are subjected to the Seattle School Board's oversight authority, then I will support the School Board. My belief is that elected officials must be able to be held accountable for how public monies are spent.

11) Will you vote against giving public money to charter schools or programs housed within charter schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 11)

As a state legislator, it is my fiduciary duty to vote on a balanced budget for the State of Washington. The budget funds everything I believe to be sacrosanct in a democratic society: public health, public education, public safety, social services for our most vulnerable people, protections for our environment that give us clean food, clean air, and clean water; and so much more. When I take a vote for the entire budget, I don't have the luxury of voting "no" on a line item. The Governor does have the authority for a line item veto, but we legislators don't. Therefore, I cannot promise to vote no on the entire budget if there is funding for charter schools. The State Supreme Court has ruled that the legislature must fund charter schools.

12) Will you vote to raise the cap on allowable charter schools? *

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 12)

Anything else you want to add about fully funding public education in Washington State?

We are growing to a population of 10 million people faster than most demographic studies projected. We have more than 1 million students in K-12. We have more than 500,000 students in our public higher education system. We will have close to 500,000 children ages 3-5 who will need quality childcare and early learning environments. There are more than 250,000 8th graders who have taken the College-Bound Pledge to get a high school diploma and the state will pay for their college tuition. I am running for re-election to tackle once and for all this challenge: finding stable, predictable revenue to fully fund early learning through higher education for today and for all future generations. Our current approach to public education budgets is too short-term and it does not anticipate how the system needs to expand to accommodate growth. I have served on the Higher Education Committee for 6 years. We have a terrible high school graduation rate in this state. Only about 70 percent of our high school graduates go onto a higher education enrollment. And only about 40 percent of those who do matriculate wind up with a degree or certification. These statistics are a warning bell for our state's economic future, and for the future of our communities. I hope to help create a new trajectory for all our people by making educational opportunities equally accessible and affordable.

Thank you for filling out this questionnaire! Washington's Paramount Duty will let you know when we will be publishing these responses. Questions? Please email us at info@paramountduty.org.

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