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 *

hello@meetjoenguyen.com

Candidate Name

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)

There are numerous issues with the McCleary "fix" that need to be addressed:

1. The legislature was not specific in its language and its intent as to how the extra billion dollars was to be allocated (teacher and staff salaries compared to MSOC funding for example), which is why districts and educators across the state are locked in heated battle over the funds.

2. The elimination of the state salary schedule for all 294 districts, which is now forcing every school district in the state to have to bargain locally to establish what their salary schedule is going to be, even if they bargained last year.

3. The reduction in levy dollars available to districts. For example, according to the OSPI spreadsheet "Potential Risk Factors to Compensation Sustainability" the current Vashon Island School District levy rate is 1.57 and according to OSPI's estimates, the levy rate for calendar year 2019 is going to drop to an estimated 1.36, for a -13.92% reduction in levy dollars.

4. The regionalization formula has been inequitably applied across different parts of the state and individual districts.

5. While not necessarily a part of the McCleary fix, there was also a 180 on the part of Chris Reykdal on the guidance as to how the money should be used.

There are two achievable tweaks that can be made to McCleary in order to rectify the current situation we find ourselves in. For one, we have to find new sources of revenue to provide a more stable source of funding for districts rather than forcing educators and districts to guess what the state is going to do in terms of funding. I am in favor of a capital gains and/or income tax in order to provide the extra funding, but only if there is a simultaneous Sales, Property, and B&O tax cut so that we can alleviate our regressive tax structure. The second is ensuring any new funding is specified for specific uses while also having a smaller portion be used for general use that could be used differently by districts across the state depending on their needs.

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

◉ Yes

◯ No

◯ Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 2)

If we are serious about fully funding education AND addressing our incredibly regressive tax structure, we must act now to introduce new progressive funding sources.

3) Will you vote for these specific revenues? *

☑ Capital gains tax

☑ Closing corporate tax loopholes

☑ Other: State bank and Income tax

(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)

Absolutely, this $1.1 billion cut is going to have ramifications for the foreseeable future as the $1 billion infusion for education that the legislature passed was only a one time payment. School Districts across the state are going to become insolvent within the next few years, which means staff and budget cuts across the board if nothing is done to address this.

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)

As we all know, the districts with highest needs are the ones being most negatively impacted by the 2017 education funding deal. If we are going to fix the systemic inequities that exist within our educational systems, it is critically important that we ensure districts and students receive equitable funding.

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)

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)

My wife is a special education teacher in the Highline School District so I can say with absolute certainty that Special Education has not been given the attention and funding that it needs. I look forward to casting my vote in support of fully funding special education.

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)

Yes, I would like to have the legislature examine the Massachusetts and Colorado models for school funding which is based on student need.

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

🔘 Yes

⚪ No

⚪ Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 9)

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)

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)

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?

If we are serious about fully funding our education system, we need to elect people who are fully committed to public education. My opponent has unfortunately decided to take money from groups backed by charter schools and their backers. If you look at my opponents financial reports you will see their campaign as received two maxed out contributions from "Washington Values PAC" https://tinyurl.com/yaly5ppk. When you take a look at the "Washington Values PAC" contribution list, you will see a $5,000 contribution from Stand for Children as well as another $5,000 contribution from WA Charters PAC https://tinyurl.com/ybgqkmyb. I am proud to be a product of our state's public education system, proud to be the only candidate not accepting corporate or charter school PAC money, and even prouder of my wife who is a public school teacher in the Highline School District. I will be a staunch advocate for public education in the Washington State Senate, and I look forward to working with parents in the 34th to ensure our students have access to an equitable, fully funded education system.

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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