

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 *

electjohnlovick@gmail.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)

I am immensely proud to have led the effort this past session to fund our schools and pay our teachers, and I will always vote to support education in our state. We finally fully funded our schools with an additional \$9 billion, but it is essential to understand that we can never stop investing in our students. There is still more we can do and need to do to ensure every kid receives the quality education they deserve. We need smaller class sizes, expanded access to school mental health services, more emphasis on special education needs, and serious school safety measures. I will also lead on legislation that helps keep our children in school and out of the juvenile justice system.

I have visited every school in our district and the consistent message I get from principals, teachers, and staff is that we need more counselors and more nurses in our schools. This will be a priority of mine and I will work to make this a reality in the next legislative session.

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

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 2)

As mentioned in question 1, we cannot view the end of the McCleary decision as the end-all-be-all of funding our public education system! We can never stop investing in our students, and it is critical that revenue sources are progressive, sustainable, and effective. Budgets are a reflection of morals, and we are both legally and morally obligated to make investing in our children the number one priority in all future budgets.

3) Will you vote for these specific revenues? *

Capital gains tax

Closing corporate tax loopholes

Other:

(Additional comments for question 3)

I will not only vote on closing tax loopholes, I will lead the charge to do away with loopholes that do not create jobs, force middle and working class families to pay more in taxes, and are not transparent to the public. We need to find practical solutions to fund our critical programs—not continue to give hidden tax breaks to special interests.

.....

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)

Now that we have satisfied the McCleary decision, we absolutely must continue to fund our schools and students. Our schools need to be fully funded, but we need to wait and act deliberately on this issue. We owe it to our students and taxpayers to look into the various funding mechanisms and not rush into any one approach.

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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)

If we are serious about ensuring high-quality education for every student in our state, we need to provide equitable funding to every district in our state.

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)

In every school I visit, teachers and principals talk to me about class size. I will support and lead on this issue until we have an education system where every single student can thrive and succeed and every single teacher has the resources they need to teach.

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)

Special Education and mental health services must be the next focus of funding our schools. These are critical services that are understaffed and lacking in resources. We need to streamline the process for schools to access the special-education safety net, increase mental health professionals and counselors in schools, and look into scholarships and loan repayments for teachers going into Special Education. I was proud to support HB 1827 this past session to expand grants, conditional scholarships, and loan repayments, and we need to continue looking at these types of programs to fully invest in special education and meet the needs of all our students.

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 grew up in Segregated Louisiana, at a school without a single white student. I know what discrimination in our education system looks like and I will never stand by while students are discriminated against because of the color of their skin. We need to look at this issue to find ways that actually work to foster diversity, inclusion, and community that are also financially responsible. This is when I turn to experts and advocates like yourselves, and I greatly hope we have the chance to sit down and discuss this issue.

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

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 9)

I support the concept, but it is going to be exceptionally difficult to pass legislation to this effect. For the legislature to successfully pass a simple majority for bonds, it will require broad bipartisan support, but I think it can be done.

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 support fully funding our education system. When we have fully funded our public education system with smaller class sizes, real investments in Special Education and mental health, and school safety protections, then vouchers and charter schools are discussions I would like to have.

I am a firm believer in the importance of public schools. Rather than siphoning off public funds for private and charter schools, we should be investing enough to properly pay our teachers and education staff and making sure every public school is capable of providing the exceptional education every kid deserves.

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)

Our focus needs to be on improving school safety and increasing mental health resources, ensuring smaller class sizes and fully funding special education. We need to work towards a system where every single student can succeed and learn, regardless of whether they go to a public, private, or charter school and we need to make sure our limited funds are used as effectively as possible for as many students as possible, and right now that looks like investing in our public 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?

I will keep fighting for our kids and make sure that money never gets in the way of a child's opportunities. The bottom line is that we fund our priorities and children and education must continue to be the number one priority for the legislature.

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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