

# 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 \*

josh@sutherlandforwa.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 firmly believe that the state is absolutely not fulfilling its paramount duty to amply provide for the education of all Washington children, and has allowed the chronic under-funding of our schools to continue for far too long. It is long past time that our legislators make serious changes and start putting our children first. Our state budget is a document reflective of our values, and we have a moral obligation to prioritize and invest in the needs of our children. Our students, parents and educators shouldn't be forced to go through the disruption of their daily lives that comes with cutting staff and services, and despite the progress the legislature made last session, we can still do better.

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

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

## (Additional comments for question 2)

We need to address the funding gap by enacting progressive tax reform which does not increase the tax burden for low-income earners or cut existing essential services or education programs. Rather, our education system requires new and sustainable sources of revenue, and we have a moral duty to our children to reject a regressive system which encourages disproportionate tax breaks for wealthy individuals and large corporations at the expense of vital services. I pledge to support legislation that uses progressive revenue, such as a capital gains tax, to raise the funds to amply fund all of our public schools.

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### 3) Will you vote for these specific revenues? \*

- Capital gains tax
- Closing corporate tax loopholes
- Other: B&O Reform

#### (Additional comments for question 3)

These revenue initiatives are imperative to amply funding our public schools. These progressive revenue initiatives not only bring necessary funding to our public schools, but it also ensures that everyone and every company is paying their fair share towards public education.

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### 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)

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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)

The quality of one's education should not depend on the district boundaries one may reside in. Inequities of resources and funding between districts does not fulfill the state's duty to fully fund education. It instead leaves the funding of education up to the zip codes and economic status of the families that reside in each district. This is an inefficient system and I would support the change HB 2242 to fund and eliminate district inequities.

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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 stand by the belief that every Washington child deserves the opportunity to succeed, which means a quality education in an uncrowded classroom. I-1351 seeks to do just that by improving student learning and graduation rates especially for vulnerable and at-risk children, something our state is desperately in need of. While I recognize the importance of considering sustainable revenue sources, taxpayer impact and the capacity for facilities to accommodate the provisions of the initiative, ranking 47th out of 50 states for class size is completely unacceptable. The people have spoken and it is the duty of the Legislature to secure funding.

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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 our state's public schools means funding special education. Funding the resources and training teachers need to aptly instruct special education students is imperative to meeting the state's duty of fully funding our public schools. I will not support any initiatives that come at the expense or stagnation of our state's special education programs.

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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 believe that a student's level of achievement should not depend on the zip code they grow up in, the color of their skin or the gender they identify with.. I also believe it is important for our school districts to promote diversity and inclusivity by making an effort to ensure educators resemble the students they are teaching when possible. I am eager to learn more about how to support initiatives to reduce school segregation in our state.

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

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

### (Additional comments for question 9)

This outdated practice to require a supermajority to fund school construction projects have left many schools in a decrepit state, and borderline is making these buildings categorically unsafe to instruct or be in. By making it a simple majority vote to pass bonds and levies for schools, we can efficiently start to fix these aging buildings and ensure that the very infrastructure of public education is safe and will allow school administrators to focus on teacher's resources and higher graduation rates rather than leaky roofs or unsafe buildings.

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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)

School vouchers for privately funded schools takes money away from traditional public schools. I do not support these vouchers because it allows publicly funded vouchers to go to private, sometimes religious institutions while simultaneously draining the funds going to the schools our state has a duty to fund. Allowing these vouchers to go to private or charter schools shows that the legislature does not want to fix the already existing public schools, and that is most certainly not the case with our state.

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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)

While several charter schools have produced laudable results for their students, their funding can come at the expense of public schools. As a state, we have a duty to fully fund our public schools which we are currently not doing. Until we can do that, education funding that does not directly help fully fund our public schools hurts the cause to fully fund public schools.

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

- Yes
- No
- Maybe (explain below)

(Additional comments for question 12)

Raising the cap on allowable charter schools drains funding from traditional public schools. Redirecting funds from public schools to charter schools removes the resources from public schools to adequately instruct and will incentivize more parents to send their children over to charter schools. Charter schools are not held accountable like public schools are and end up hurting traditional public schools in the process.

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

Thank you for the opportunity to pursue your support! I stand with our students, teachers, educators and school employees fighting for competitive salaries and their livelihoods.

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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](mailto:info@paramountduty.org).

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