



Legislative Platform 2009-10

Vancouver Public Schools

Vancouver Public Schools serves 22,500 students and employs 3,300 staff members in Southwest Washington.

Board of Directors:

Dale Rice, President
Edri Geiger, Vice President
Kathy Gillespie
Mari Greves
Mark Stoker

Superintendent:

Steven T. Webb, Ed.D.

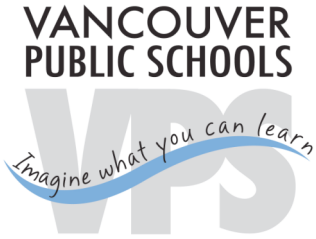
Vancouver Public Schools
P.O. Box 8937
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Priorities:

- 1. Full funding of our public schools**
- 2. Sensible education reform**
- 3. Safe schools**
- 4. Family-community resource centers**



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We believe:

Our graduates must be ready for college, career, and life, which can happen only through a well-supported K-12 public school system.

Excellent schools are essential to the economic health and vitality of our communities, the quality of life of our citizens, and the future of our democracy.

Local levy dollars are intended to enhance our K-12 schools. The state should not encroach on community resources by failing to provide full funding for basic education.

Funding for our schools must be stable over the long term, adequate to meet the growing needs of our diverse society, and equitable for all children.

1. Full funding of our public schools

We advise the legislature to:

- Fully fund the following: cost-of-living adjustments (COLAs) for all employees, special education, pupil transportation, substitute personnel, utilities, insurance, and other necessities. Ensure that any catch-up provisions that may be enacted as a result of the temporary suspension of the COLA do not adversely impact school districts.
- Establish a full-funding system for K-12 education that is sustainable, predictable, and equitable. Until such a system is implemented, prevent further funding disparities among districts (e.g., differences in teacher compensation) by maintaining the current 24 percent levy lid and protecting levy equalization.
- Provide school districts with adequate financial support to assure a balanced and relevant education: academics, technology and information literacy, arts, health and fitness, social and cultural understanding, linguistics and world languages, citizenship, leadership, and employability skills.
- Ensure that legislation pertaining to graduation requirements is reasonable, achievable, and adequately resourced.
- Increase state funding support for school construction and modernization.

It is the paramount duty of the state to make ample provision for the education of all children residing within its borders ... The Legislature shall provide for a general and uniform system of public schools.

Constitution of the State of Washington, Article IX – Education



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We believe:

The purpose of public education is to develop competent, responsible and compassionate citizens. Our mission therefore extends far beyond the attainment of standards in reading, writing, math, and science.

To achieve breakthrough results, assessments should be used, first and foremost, as tools to inform and guide daily instruction.

Students should have opportunities to demonstrate their learning in multiple ways.

The accountability system should encourage and expect growth in achievement over time, while recognizing that all students begin at different levels and progress at different rates.

A complete and accurate picture of school and district performance can be seen only through many different metrics (e.g., Baldrige Criteria for Performance Excellence).

As elected representatives of the communities they serve, school boards are appropriately positioned to ensure accountability.

2. Sensible education reform

We advise the legislature to:

- Ensure that all students receive a balanced and relevant education: academics, technology and information literacy, arts, health and fitness, social and cultural understanding, linguistics and world languages, citizenship, leadership, and employability skills.
- Support the development and implementation of formative assessment tools, including technology-enabled systems, which help teachers diagnose the learning needs of each student and prescribe instruction tailored to those needs.
- Provide funding to implement increased graduation requirements (Core 24).
- Expand alternative ways for students to demonstrate proficiency (e.g., end-of-course assessments, project and portfolio presentations) on the path to graduation.
- Shift the focus of accountability to a growth-oriented model that expects and promotes continuous gains in learning for individual students and cohort groups.
- Establish a broad-based reporting structure for measuring and monitoring school and district performance.
- Protect the authority of local school boards to oversee school and district improvement efforts.
- Provide regulatory or statutory flexibility for districts to establish innovative schools of choice.



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We believe:

The safety of young people always must be our first concern as educators and policy makers.

Investments in the prevention of youth violence can save lives and will pay dividends to our communities, our state, and our society over the long term.

Out of school time programs engage children and youth in constructive activities and help them develop social, emotional, physical, cultural and academic skills.

3. Safe schools

We advise the legislature to:

- Provide funding for School Resource Officers in high-needs schools as determined by factors such as crime and gang activity in the community, diversity in the student population, school enrollment, etc.
- Provide funding to help school districts and their partners develop and/or expand out-of-school time programs, including before/after school and intersession programs.



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We believe:

To increase student learning and narrow the achievement gaps in schools impacted by poverty and related factors, we must reduce barriers to learning. Through partnerships, we can leverage resources to develop and implement a collaborative system of “wrap around” support that empowers students, families, schools, neighborhoods and communities.

Community school models such as Hough Elementary School and Fruit Valley Community Learning Center in Vancouver should be replicated throughout our community and the state.

- The Hough and Fruit Valley models integrate support for families and community members such as childcare, early childhood and K-5 education, mental health counseling, basic needs assistance, adult education, family support, after school programs, and other services.
- Vancouver Public Schools is engaging with partners to create a network of family-community resource centers in several other schools.

4. Family-community resource centers

We advise the legislature to:

- Provide *capital* funding to establish family-community resource centers in schools that serve neighborhoods and communities with high levels of socio-economic need.
- Provide *operational* funding for staffing family-community resource centers in schools.