

Education/Operating

K-12 Education

The governor's proposed 2024 supplemental budget prioritizes Washington's special education students and provides much needed support to school district staff. These investments will continue to support the growing needs of Washington students and school employees.

Support a livable wage and benefits for classified staff

Improve paraeducator compensation

School districts employ nearly 32,000 paraeducators across Washington. They are critical members of a student's learning and instructional support team, often supporting special education students. The governor recognizes this important work and is committed to supporting school districts' capacity to recruit and retain this workforce. The proposed budget includes an additional \$64 million for a \$3 per hour wage increase, adjusted by the regionalization factors currently applicable to basic education funding. This equates to an approximate 11% wage increase on average.

(\$64 million General Fund-State, \$161,000 Washington Opportunity Pathways Account [OPA])

Secure benefits for contracted bus staff

The School Employees Benefits Board (SEBB) administers health insurance and other benefits for employees of Washington's school districts. Because some districts contract out their student transportation services, those

employees are not eligible for SEBB benefits. The governor's proposed budget would fund legislation (Substitute House Bill 1248) to allow contract bus drivers and related staff to opt-in to SEBB coverage and retirement benefits. This ensures that people who work for schools have the opportunity to receive health and retirement benefits.

(\$425,000 GF-S)

Support Washington's most vulnerable students

Respond to special education needs

The 2024 supplemental budget builds on significant progress that the state has made during the governor's time in office. The enacted 2023-25 budget increased the special education funding cap from 13.5% to 15% of each district's average annual enrollment. The governor now proposes further increases to the cap, up to 17.25%. This will further help fully fund services for districts with high populations of students with special needs. Special education support has more than doubled under Inslee's leadership and with this \$17 million investment, the state will be funding nearly \$4.4 billion for special education.

(\$17 million Education Legacy Trust Account, \$9,000 OPA)

Washington strives to have the most prepared teachers and the most inclusive special education program in the nation. Because students learn best from dedicated and prepared educators, the budget also makes

strategic investments to expand the teacher workforce. The governor calls for \$7.3 million to provide wages and support for teacher residency. Teacher candidates with a bachelor's degree can work while earning their special education endorsement to become fully certificated. This program will draw from a pool of candidates with emergency certifications who may have been working as substitute teachers, among other roles. Through mentorship, coaching, and professional development opportunities, Washington will continue to strengthen its teacher workforce.

(\$7 million Workforce Education Investment Account [WEIA])

Increase student food security

The governor is committed to supporting students' nutritional needs. Recent legislation requires eligible schools to participate in a federal food program called the Community Eligibility Provision (CEP). This program provides free meals to all students in schools with large populations of low-income students. However, federal funds do not cover the full cost of these meals. To further support students, the governor proposes an additional \$30 million to fully fund the CEP expansion, for a total investment of \$132 million this biennium. In total, 550,000 students will now receive school meals at no out-of-pocket cost to the student through the CEP.

(\$30 million GF-S)

Support behavioral health and opioid use prevention

As the nation continues to navigate the impacts of the opioid epidemic and record high overdose deaths, the governor proposes

increased funding to educate students about this topic. With this support, the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) will consult with the nine Educational Service Districts, other state agencies, and local public health leaders to review and update the health standards related to substance abuse. OSPI will also make education materials available for school district use. Schools will receive the most current information and tools to supplement the programs they already implement, including information about the risk of death from fentanyl and other opioids. This investment is also referenced in the Opioids Policy Brief.

(\$125,000 GF-S)

Funding is also provided to Educational Service Districts to hire staff and trainers that provide school-based behavioral health services.

This investment is also referenced in the Opioids Policy Brief.

(\$2 million GF-S)

Invest in Washington's future workforce

Enhance climate-based education

An effective K-12 education means arming students with the tools they need to tackle the challenges facing our society when they graduate. The governor's budget builds on an existing \$6 million investment by providing an additional \$4 million to continue support for Next Generation Science Standards (NGSS). OSPI will integrate climate change content in state learning standards and develop curriculum resources. Funding for NGSS will promote teacher development in climate science education and bolster support for community-based organizations to partner with schools,

Tribes, and educational service districts. Additionally, these resources will provide students with early exposure to key topics such as climate justice, renewable energy, and waste reduction, creating the next generation of good environmental stewards throughout the state.

(\$4 million GF-S)

Prepare students from all backgrounds for high-demand careers

This proposed budget includes a \$3 million annual investment that will continue to provide Washington's students with the unique opportunity to gain information technology certifications while they're enrolled in middle and high school. Washington is home to world-class technology firms, and these funds will further serve to connect Washington students with high-paying jobs that require in-demand technical skills. To date, this program has provided more than 625,000 certifications and credentials to students and educators in Washington.

Equity-focused at its core, this investment provides a career entry point for students, regardless of their socioeconomic background. To date, the program has 42% female enrollment, which is significantly higher than the tech sector where women comprise about 25% of the workforce. The program also has 29% Latino/Hispanic enrollment, which is significantly higher than the 6.3% Latino/Hispanic employment rate in the U.S. technology sector.

(\$3 million WELA)

An additional \$3 million is provided for the Rally for College initiative. The program gives students of all backgrounds the skills and

knowledge they need to make the most of high school and prepare for a rewarding college experience. Not all students are aware of their options after high school. This equity-focused investment will provide students with advisors and coaches to make college admissions less confusing and more achievable for students, regardless of their socioeconomic background, race, gender, or immigration status.

(\$3 million GF-S)

Higher education

The governor's proposed higher education investments continue to prioritize student supports as well as the state's workforce needs. This proposed budget aims to increase postsecondary enrollment, expand workforce development opportunities, and address persistent equity gaps in postsecondary enrollment and completion.

Expand investment in postsecondary enrollment

Increase access to Washington College Grant
Washington continues to lead the nation in the financial aid resources available to students from low- and middle-income households. The governor's proposed budget further enhances the Washington College Grant program by removing the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a barrier for families who qualify for the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) and other Washington food assistance programs.

(\$239,000 WELA)

Additionally, funding will help align the maximum timeframes when students are eligible to receive the Washington College

Grant, College Bound Scholarship, and Passport to Careers programs with the federal Pell Grant program. Currently, students can receive federal Pell Grant funds for approximately six full-time years, which equates to about 12 semesters or 18 quarters. In contrast, state financial aid recipients have a maximum use limit of four full-time years of eligibility for the College Bound Scholarship, and five full-time years for the Washington College Grant and the Passport to Careers programs. Aligning time frames across these programs will ensure Washingtonians can access consistent and predictable financial aid support, making postsecondary education more accessible.

(\$1 million WELA)

Support Shelton Promise at The Evergreen State College

The governor's proposed budget takes additional steps to support students' pursuit of postsecondary education by establishing the Shelton Promise pilot program at The Evergreen State College. With federal and state financial aid as a foundation, the program will guarantee that students in Mason County's Shelton School District have a chance to attend nearby Evergreen State College and attain a four-year degree without significant debt. The program will use local data and 'lessons learned' from successful college promise programs around the country to help students and their families find their way to a postsecondary credential.

(\$738,000 WELA)

Increase support for other education initiatives

The governor proposes increasing support for the Washington Award for Vocational

Excellence (WAVE) scholarship program. The WAVE scholarship rewards students involved in career and technical education at Washington high schools or community and technical colleges. The funding will restore scholarship awards to the maximum amount, covering the true cost of postsecondary education and incentivizing students to pursue a postsecondary credential.

(\$500,000 WELA)

Similarly, the Early Achievers Grant program aims to help individuals employed as childcare providers and early learning educators earn a credential in early childhood education. The governor proposes increasing funding to cover recruitment, advising, and student support activities at community and technical colleges.

(\$2.4 million WELA)

Increase investment in training and workforce development

Continue training opportunities in health care

The governor proposes continued funding to support the Behavioral Health Teaching Facility at the University of Washington Medical Center. Scheduled to open in 2024, the teaching facility will support individuals struggling with serious physical and behavioral health problems. Additionally, the hospital will provide interdisciplinary training and workforce development to Washington's next generation of behavioral health workers, furthering the governor's commitment to transform the state's behavioral health system.

(\$12 million GF-S, \$8 million WELA)

The proposed budget also includes funding to develop a postbaccalaureate dental therapy certificate. Washington established the profession of dental therapy in 2023. The new dental therapy credential will increase dental education on the east side of the state and the availability of dental care for underserved communities.

(\$127,000 WELA)

Expand the Regional Initiatives in Dental Education (RIDE) program

The RIDE Program is a part of the University of Washington's School of Dentistry program and trains dentists to meet the oral health needs of rural and underserved populations in the state. The funding would double the four-year enrollment of RIDE dental students and help support a cohesive Eastern Washington Regional Training Center for dentistry in the University of Washington-Gonzaga University Health Sciences Building in Spokane.

(\$2.5 million GF-S)

Maintain career-connected learning

Since launching the Career Connect Washington initiative in 2017, the governor has committed to providing Washington students with career-connected learning opportunities so they are prepared for high-demand, high-wage jobs. The governor continues this commitment by increasing investments in this student-centered initiative. In addition to sustaining existing Career Launch programs to meet enrollment demand, the governor proposes allocating a portion of Climate Commitment Act funding to develop clean energy training programs across the state.

This item also appears in the Climate and

Energy Policy Brief.

(\$3.8 million WELA, \$1.5 million Climate Commitment Account [CCA])

Invest in additional workforce development

The governor's proposed budget includes funding to continue expanding the electrical and computer engineering program at Western Washington University. This program was established to address local workforce needs.

(\$886,000 WELA)

Additionally, the governor proposes funding to support the community and technical college system as it adjusts to addressing climate change. Community and technical colleges will work to incorporate climate justice and solutions-focused elements into the curriculum as well as enhance green workforce development programs.

This item also appears in the Climate and Energy Policy Brief.

(\$950,000 CCA)

Address equity gaps in higher education

Increase degree completion in computer science and engineering

The Allen School Scholars program at the University of Washington provides workshops, academic advising, and seminars throughout the year to emerging leaders from low-income households and underserved communities who are pursuing a degree in computer science and engineering. The governor's proposed funding for the program would continue the one-time funding provided during the 2023 legislative

session, and help create a diverse, highly-skilled workforce.

(\$330,000 WELA)

Support Washington's first MESA university center

MESA (Mathematics, Engineering, Science Achievement) is a nationally recognized program aimed at helping educationally disadvantaged students excel in math and science and graduate with science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) degrees. Washington's first MESA University Center was established at Eastern Washington University with one-time funding provided in the 23-25 biennial budget. The governor's proposed 2024 supplemental budget includes continued funding for the center to establish a STEM Education Center. This center will provide training and professional development to

K-12 teachers and prepare students for STEM careers.

(\$2.1 million WELA)

Aid students experiencing basic needs insecurity

As the governor continues to prioritize poverty reduction efforts across the state, this supplemental funding would support students experiencing basic needs insecurity. Funding provided to Central Washington University and The Evergreen State College will support critical needs at each institution, including staffing campus food pantries and hiring full-time benefits navigators and student advocates.

(\$471,000 WELA)

Education/Capital

K-12 education

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Construct new and modernize existing schools

Partner with school districts to construct and modernize schools throughout the state. Increase the state percentage of construction cost for schools that pass bonds and levies, benefiting school districts statewide. Funding level changes reflect a decrease in expected eligible projects, changes in funding sources, and an increase to the state-funded cost per square foot. The construction cost allocation (the state-funded cost per square foot) has increased from \$272 per square foot to \$350 per square foot for fiscal year 2025 in the 2024 supplemental budget.

(\$91 million Common School Construction Account)

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Conduct improvements at small district and Tribal compact schools

Assist statewide Tribal compact schools and school districts with less than 1,000 students through a competitive grant program, funding building system repairs and project planning statewide.

(\$177 million Common School Construction Account)

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

Increase access to clean air in schools

School buildings struggle to keep up with rising temperatures and wildfire smoke. This new program will provide grants to school districts for heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems, air filtration enhancements, and general air quality improvements, making it easier for kids to learn safely and comfortably.

(\$20 million Climate Commitment Account, \$20 million Common School Construction Account)

Higher education four-year institutions

The governor plans to invest more capital funds into colleges and universities through funds made available by the Climate Commitment Act. This extra funding will help these schools lower their impact on the environment and will make for more sustainable campuses and institutions. To learn more about how the state is fighting climate change, refer to the Climate and Energy brief.

University of Washington

Support Energy Renewal program
Support energy renewal and decarbonization efforts across all three campuses and UW Medical Center facilities.

(\$38.9 million Climate Commitment Account)

Eastern Washington University

Invest in energy improvements

Modernize aging infrastructure to reduce annual building energy use and greenhouse gas emissions by 38%. This will happen by replacing HVAC systems and air handlers.

(\$5.2 million Climate Commitment Account)

Central Washington University

Invest in green building energy

Construct a second geothermal well system (building on the initial geothermal well that was funded in the enacted budget) and re-engineer three large science buildings to connect to it. This is part of CWU's plan to switch from centralized natural gas boilers to modular renewable energy through geothermal electric heating and cooling.

(\$12.5 million Climate Commitment Account)

Central Washington University

Reduce science building carbon emissions

Funding would bring the campus' Science 1 building in closer compliance with the Clean Buildings Performance Standard by providing a comprehensive overhaul of the mechanical systems and components. This includes the building's chiller, air handling units, fume hoods, lab equipment, and lighting. Science 1 currently has the second highest energy use intensity rating on campus, second only to the boiler plant, and this funding will greatly reduce that rating.

(\$4.5 million Climate Commitment Account)

Community and technical colleges

State Board for Community and Technical Colleges

Gather energy performance data through utility meters

Install energy submeters in individual buildings to ensure the state board is compliant with energy performance standards established in the Clean Buildings Act.

(\$8.5 million Climate Commitment Account)