JUST THE FACTS

At no other time has a high-quality education been more crucial to our city, state, nation and our children. A quality education is the pathway to a successful future for our students. Innovating for achievement is rapidly evolving through economic, social, political, informational and technological changes in today’s globally competitive environment. To maximize its effectiveness in the 2015 session, Tacoma Public Schools should focus on a set of issues that have the broadest impact on the district. To meet these challenges, Tacoma Public Schools makes the following policy recommendations to achieve our mutual goal for educating students who are healthy, safe, engaged, supported and challenged and who graduate college and career ready.

There are many short- and long-term issues related to basic education funding that must be addressed by the Washington State Legislature.
SCHOOL CONSTRUCTION FUNDING

TPS urges the legislature to increase funding for K-12 school construction so that all school districts can accommodate the increased classroom space demands, especially the following:

- Increase the square foot per student and area cost allowance formulas to more accurately reflect the space needs of a modern school, and the actual costs of construction.
- Allow 100% state matching funds for school remodeling as well as new construction.
- Provide funding for local government/school district joint projects.
- Fully account for pre-school and kindergarten students in the student enrollment projections for school construction funding.
- Prioritize STEM and CTE campus funding in order to expand enrollments.

OPERATING BUDGET

McCleary Decision - Fully Fund:
- Labor Staffing Costs.
- Materials, Supplies and Operating Costs (MSOC).
- K-3 Class Size Reduction.
- Highly Capable Programs, with particular emphasis on STEM.
- Full-Day Kindergarten.

Maintain local levy authority and levy equalization funding.

Allow for flexible use of Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funding.

Fund Professional Development and Collaboration time.

Modify Law to qualify for a waiver to the federal No Child Left Behind law (TPEP).

Strengthen dual credit/dual enrollment programs to allow students to gain more college credits in the high-school setting.

Reimburse school districts for college testing costs (PSAT, SAT, IB, AP, STEM).

Provide more funding for college in the high schools programs like College in the High School and Running Start and other such programs.

INNOVATION AND REFORM

TPS recognizes that innovation in education is needed to achieve higher graduation rates. TPS specifically requests that the legislature pursue the following policy issues:

- Increase dual credits to be transferable as general education credits to all state schools, and cap the overall cost of offering dual credits to students.
- Provide more statutory flexibility to innovation schools, allowing them to operate in a manner that meets local needs, as flexible as other private and charter schools.
- Limit the number of charters schools to two per district.
- Require Charter School Commission to work directly with all school districts to eliminate all redundancy in the schools system.