



# The Local Effort Assistance Program

## A tool for increasing educational equity

The Local Effort Assistance program (LEA), also known as levy equalization, provides additional funding to schools in districts where property values are low, to lessen the burden above average property tax rates have on a school district's ability to raise local revenue (RCW 28A.500). These funds help schools hire counselors, psychologists, and nurses, and fund enrichment programs like athletics, music, and other clubs. **Increasing LEA funding for school districts and expanding eligibility to include all charter public schools, is a step towards a stronger, more equitably funded public education system for the students who need it the most.**

### IN RESEARCH



#### THE UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON | 2022

[Establishing Priorities for Education Finance Under Fiscal Uncertainty: Recommendations for Washington State Policymakers](#)

According to a 2022 analysis by the University of Washington, the LEA program greatly benefits **low-income students and students of color:**

**" We recommend that state legislators expand LEA funding as [this] disproportionately benefit[s] low-income students and students of color."**

Knight, D. S., & Plecki, M. (2022). Establishing priorities for education finance under fiscal uncertainty: Recommendations for Washington State policymakers. Seattle, WA: University of Washington.

**1 of 2** PROGRAMS EQUALIZING SCHOOL FUNDING

- Among the largest 11 funding programs in Washington's K-12 finance system, which together account for 98 percent of state aid, LEA is one of only two funding programs designed to equalize funding across school districts by progressively allocating funds.

**2X** FUNDING PER STUDENT

- The LEA program allocates twice as much funding per student to schools in high-poverty districts as compared to schools in low-poverty districts and sends slightly more funding to districts serving higher proportions of Black, Indigenous, and Latinx students.



## All public schools are not funded equitably

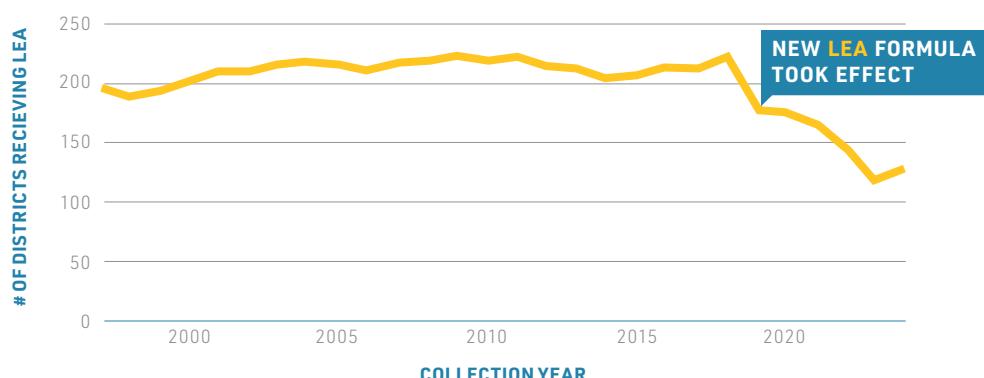
Because of the current funding formula and a decline in Local Effort Assistance, public school students in districts where property values are low and those attending charter public schools receive significantly less funding than their peers in districts with higher property values.

**-25%** LESS  
PUBLIC  
FUNDING



## SERVE HIGHER RATES OF MARGINALIZED STUDENTS

- Students in charter public schools receive ~25% less public funding than their peers in traditional public schools due to lack of access to local property tax levies and dedicated facilities funding. However, as intended by Washington's unique charter law, charter public schools enroll disproportionately higher rates of systemically underserved students (RCW 28A.710).
- Schools in districts where property values are low struggle to generate enough enrichment funds through local taxation, even if they tax themselves at a rate comparable to districts with higher property values. Like charter public schools, these districts are also more likely to serve higher rates of marginalized students.



All public-school students deserve the funding needed to provide them with a strong, well-rounded education. Expanding LEA funding would shrink the funding gap for charter public schools and allow schools in districts where property values are low to raise as much money through local property taxation as the wealthiest districts in the state. **An investment in LEA funding is an investment against widening the gap for our most at-risk students.**



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## ABOUT US

We are the Washington State Charter Schools Association (WA Charters), a statewide nonprofit organization advocating for high-impact, student-centered charter public schools in Washington state

For more information, please contact:

**Chris Korsmo | Executive Director,  
Washington State Charter Schools Association  
206.999.5547 | chris@wacharters.org**

