



April 24, 2019



Honorable Members of the Washington State Legislature,

Thank you for the time and consideration you devoted to education funding and policy issues this legislative session. We know that finding solutions which work for all 295 school districts is difficult.

Regarding school employee healthcare benefits, we hope that any solution will maintain the established intention of the original SEBB statute. As you work toward assuring consistent, sustainable, and affordable healthcare for all school employees, we respectfully request your support of the policy objectives outlined in SB 6020:

Eligibility Threshold: Please support a threshold to qualify for full health benefits at 1,040 hours worked. The current threshold of 630 hours (3.5 hours per day for 180 workdays) to qualify for full health benefits is not affordable or sustainable for school districts without an increasing reliance on local levy funds. School districts routinely employ numerous part-time positions in order to meet a variety of needs such as transportation, nutrition services, and student supervision. If a goal of the legislation is equity in the provision of health benefits to all school employees, we believe SB 6020's provision of pro-rated benefits between 630 and 1,040 hours provides such equity.

Adopt the SEBB Collective Bargaining Agreement with these changes contained in SB 6020:

- Change the eligibility threshold for full health benefits from 630 to 1,040 hours worked.
- Beginning January 2021, provide school employees working between 630 and 1,040 hours with a pro-rated benefit through the SEBB.
- More explicitly links bargaining for part time employees to the SEBB benefit provided for part-time employees effective in January 2021.

For 2020, we also request that the Legislature allocate short-term funding to school districts to provide a pro-rated benefit to employees working between 630 and 1,040 hours while the HCA makes necessary system changes and procures affordable plans for employees receiving a pro-rated benefit.

Adopt a Solution for Educational Service Districts: The SEBB imposes a disproportionate unfunded mandate on ESDs. Washington's nine ESDs are not funded for employee health benefits by staff units like school districts. They receive a very small portion of State core funding, have no access to local levy funds, and have limited options to fund all employees' movement to the SEBB. SB 6020 would delay implementation of the SEBB for non-represented ESD employees and permit those ESDs currently providing health benefits through the Public Employees Benefits Board to continue doing so while a more careful study of ESD healthcare benefits and funding options is completed. This delay will sustain many ESD services school districts rely on like School Nurse Corp and early learning programs.

Thank you for your consideration and support of the policy goals of SB 6020.

Sincerely,

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