

RCW 28A.150.198 Finding—Intent—2009 c 548. (1) Public education in Washington state has evolved since the enactment of the Washington basic education act of 1977. Decisions by the courts have played a part in this evolution, as have studies and research about education practices and education funding. The legislature finds ample evidence of a need for continuing to refine the program of basic education that is funded by the state and delivered by school districts.

(2) The legislature reaffirms the work of Washington Learns and other educational task forces that have been convened over the past four years and their recommendations to make bold reforms to the entire educational system in order to educate all students to a higher level; to focus on the individualized instructional needs of students; to strive towards closing the achievement gap and reducing dropout rates; and to prepare students for a constantly evolving workforce and increasingly demanding global economy. In enacting this legislation, the legislature intends to continue to review, evaluate, and revise the definition and funding of basic education in order to continue to fulfill the state obligation under Article IX of the state Constitution. The legislature also intends to continue to strengthen and modify the structure of the entire K-12 educational system, including nonbasic education programmatic elements, in order to build the capacity to anticipate and support potential future enhancements to basic education as the educational needs of our citizens continue to evolve.

(3) The legislature recognizes that the first step in revising the definition and funding of basic education is to create a transparent funding system for both allocations and expenditures so that not only policymakers and educators understand how the state supports basic education but also taxpayers. An adequate data system that enables the legislature to make rational, data-driven decisions on which educational programs impact student learning in order to more effectively and efficiently deliver the resources necessary to provide an ample program of basic education is also a necessity. A new prototypical funding system will allow the legislature to better understand how current resources are being used. A more complete and accurate educational data system will allow the legislature to understand whether current basic education programs are supporting student learning. Only with both of these systems in place can the legislature make informed decisions on how to best implement a dynamic and evolving system of basic education.

(4) For practical and educational reasons, major changes of the program of basic education and the funding formulas to support it cannot occur instantaneously. The legislature intends to build upon the previous efforts of the legislature and the basic education task force in order to develop a realistic implementation strategy for a new instructional program after technical experts develop the details of the prototypical schools funding formulas and the data and reporting system that will support a new instructional program. The legislature also intends to establish a formal structure for monitoring the implementation by the legislature of an evolving program of basic education and the financing necessary to support such a program. The legislature intends that the redefined program of basic education and funding for the program be fully implemented by 2018.

(5) It is the further intent of the legislature to also address additional issues that are of importance to the legislature but are not part of basic education. [2009 c 548 § 1.]

Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.410.270.

Intent—Finding—2009 c 548: See note following RCW 28A.305.130.