

THE NUMBERS don't add up for Washington's public schools.

We've fallen way behind in funding. But we know 78,000

public school employees who can't wait to get back in the lead.

READY TO TAKE THE LEAD?





I left teaching last year because I got tired of not having the time, money and resources I need to help my students. In the end, though, my love of teaching was stronger than my level of frustration and I'm back. I do not want to give up on my students. And I don't want the state to give up on them, either.

— Freedom Johnson, Special Needs Teacher, Renton

▶ **The numbers are shocking**

Our schools rank far behind most states in the country

Despite the talent, energy and passion of Washington's 78,000 public school employees, two decades of steady and widespread decline in education funding have put our schools behind in the areas that hurt most — class size, spending per student and employee compensation.

Today, the stark reality is that Washington's schools rank far behind most other states in the country.

Washington's schools have fallen way behind

- ▶ **Washington ranks 46th in the nation in class size.** We would need 11,659 more classroom teachers to match the national pupil-to-teacher average.
- ▶ **Washington ranks 42nd in the nation in education spending.** Alabama and Arkansas spend more per student than we do here in Washington.
- ▶ **We have \$2 billion less for schools this year** because of the decline in state funding that began two decades ago.
- ▶ **We spend \$548 less per student than we did in 1992** — before education reform began in our state (and before most people used the Internet).
- ▶ **We are dead last in compensation** among the five West Coast states — and well below the national average, too.

We've fallen behind, even though our state's constitution declares education funding to be Washington's "paramount duty."

We've fallen behind, even though the demand for greater student achievement grows every year.

We've fallen behind, even though the funding shortage leaves its mark on every classroom, hallway, gymnasium, lunchroom, teacher's office, and public school facility across the state.

We've fallen behind, even though opinion research consistently confirms that the public believes strengthening communities, preserving our quality of life, and economic prosperity depend on improving public education in the state.

"Making do" only goes so far

Behind these shocking numbers are thousands of personal stories — public school employees admirably "making do" through resourcefulness, creativity and self-sacrifice despite lack of time and money. These stories inspire, but they will break your heart, too. Individual passion and commitment can only go so far when the funding crisis compromises our mission every day.

You'll find some of these stories on the following pages — stories that include "personal numbers" that convey the everyday impact of the funding crisis.

You'll find something else here, too: For all the setbacks these stories express, the amazing truth is that so many of Washington's public education employees simply won't give up.

You love your job too much, and you believe too much in the mission of public education to leave it behind.

► *It's time to take the lead*

A statewide campaign for a permanent funding source

We can't "make do" forever — at some point we'll fall too far behind to ever catch up — and that, of course, is wholly unacceptable.

So what are we going to do?

A campaign to permanently increase funding for Washington's public schools

Beginning today, the Washington Education Association will lead a statewide campaign to permanently increase funding for public education — from K-12 through higher education.

It's called **Take the lead. Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools.**

Take the lead will make the public aware of how far our schools have fallen behind and how each child's future is shortchanged by the consequences.

Take the lead will campaign for a solution at a whole new level — not simply fighting for specific budget issues or focusing on one specific policy area. The whole system is falling behind, and we need a wholesale, permanent and sustainable funding solution to catch up to the nation's leading states.

Take the lead will challenge the governor, the Legislature, local elected officials, policy-makers, opinion leaders, business leaders, parents, taxpayers and citizens to join us in new thinking to bring school funding back to the level our children deserve.

Take the lead will encourage you and all other WEA members to be the campaign's leading edge — helping to make people

aware both of the impact of the funding crisis on our children's futures and of the potential to make our schools great again.

Take the lead begins with you.

Please read through the following pages. Familiarize yourself with the five major statistics and the supporting facts that define the magnitude of the crisis. Think about the personal stories and personal numbers that convey the human dimensions of the problem. Then share your story with your colleagues and spread the word in your community. Sometimes it's difficult to remember that the challenges you face every day are multiplied thousands of times over in every school and work location across the state.

In the coming months, you'll hear more about the **Take the lead** campaign.

We need your number — and the story behind it

Like the ones you'll read in this booklet, personal stories are the most compelling way to convey the reality behind the numbers to public officials, parents, fellow school employees, and friends and family. Please send us your personal story behind the funding crisis — and include a "personal number" that defines it. *(See page 18 for more information.)*

Let's take the lead.

Find out more at: **www.taketheleadwashington.org** or call **800-622-3393** and ask for "WEA Communications."



Take the lead.

Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools

▶ 46th in class size



On average, I can only spend **2.7 MINUTES** a day with each of my 145 students — less time than an espresso barista spends talking to a customer. I am expected to prepare each student to become a skilled reader and writer so they can pass the WASL, inspire love for learning, and accomplish state goals. Yet, with so many students, I feel I can only perform triage — who needs attention the most? Limited state funding translates into large classes where students do not get the attention they need to be successful.

— Betsy Andrews, High School English Teacher, Auburn



With **37 STUDENTS IN PHYSICS** I lack the time to supervise student work as I would like to — and labs are virtually impossible to monitor. Question-and-answer sessions become one dimensional, because most students are unwilling to ask questions in front of such a large audience. Students have to take responsibility for their own learning. It boils down to a complete lack of ongoing assessment.

— Paul EveryHope, High School Physics Teacher, Mt. Vernon



I teach five classes a day with 29-30 students each. I grade **1,500 ESSAY PARAGRAPHS A MONTH**, not including daily assignments that often add up to an additional 300 paragraphs each week. If I only had to teach, I would not mind grading at home until 11 p.m. But I must also sign planners . . . call and e-mail parents . . . attend meetings . . . and be a mom at home. I love teaching — I don't want to give it up and go back to the business sector — but some days I don't know how long I will last.

— Rahat "Dee" Brastad, High School English Teacher, Kennewick



Take the lead.
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I have less time than an espresso barista spends talking to a customer

▶ 42nd in education spending

per student, out of all 50 states and Washington, D.C.



Full-time librarian and full-time retail book sales to support the library



Being a librarian today means actually having two jobs: full-time librarian and full-time retail book sales to support the library. I spend **10 MONTHS EVERY YEAR** managing classroom book sales, holding book fairs and running carnivals to keep my library going. If we spent the proper amount of money on our students, I could spend the proper amount of time sharing my passion for reading and getting books and resources into their hands.

— Lisa Clayton, Librarian, K-8
Alternative School, Seattle



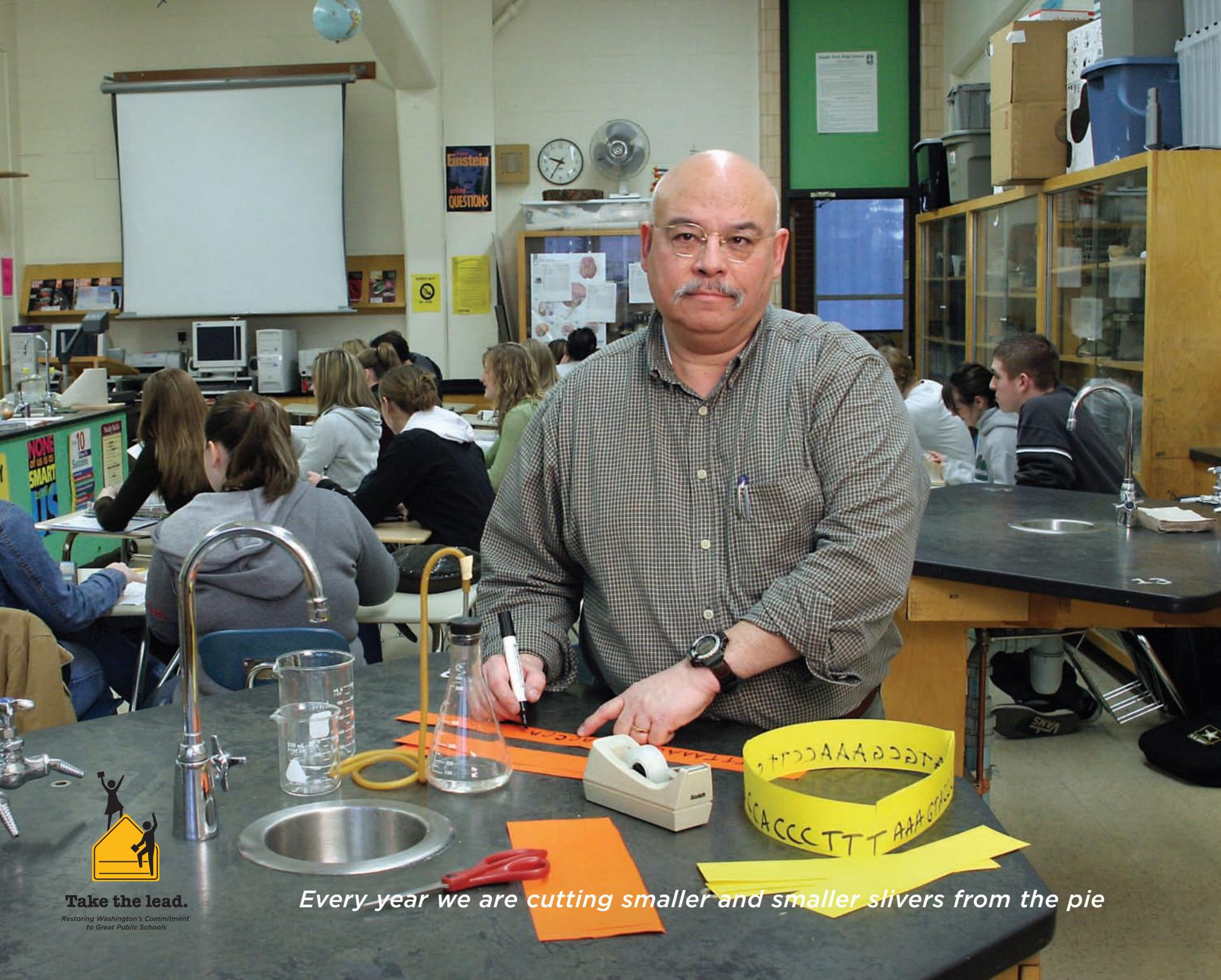
I am a counselor for **TWO** schools. I report to two principals, maintain two offices, and support two sets of teaching staff, and each wants more of my time. The American School Counseling Association recommends a caseload of 200 - 250 students; I have two times that, as does the district's other counselor (that's right, we only have two!). With more funding, my district could afford more counseling and crisis support, more career and lifestyle education — more comprehensive programs for each student.

— Joshua Deiss, Counselor for Two Schools, Walla Walla



I want to do everything in my power to help students grow, but it seems everything has been put in place to make that impossible — especially the lack of time to teach. I hate settling, but often I must. If I don't have time to plan great lessons for every class, that has to be okay — otherwise I'd have no energy to teach effectively. And still I fall behind every week. But I've made a pact with a friend to stay **AT LEAST FIVE YEARS** — to beat the statistic that most new teachers leave before then (I'm in my second year).

— Kathy Williams, Middle School Teacher, Snohomish



▶ **\$2 billion less for schools**

than if our state had kept pace with education funding



I love science and watching students learn — that has kept me energized for **28.5 YEARS**. Yet, I must be very creative with budgets to provide activities that cause students to think and value science. For example, we couldn't purchase \$80 kits that gave the kids a lab experience, so I substituted a "paper, tape and scissors" activity. Don't get me wrong — we understand this, adapt, and pay for supplies out of our own pocket. It's just that every year we are cutting smaller and smaller slivers from the pie.

— Hank Mendoza, High School Science Teacher, Spokane



Each trimester I have to come up with **816 INDIVIDUAL GRADES** — 34 grades times 24 students. We don't have just one math grade, we grade for "algebraic sense," "geometric sense," "measurement," etc. — our report card has more boxes than a year of New York *Times* crossword puzzles! Weekly schedules leave little planning time, so truly fair assessments for so many areas are impossible. It's important to keep parents well informed, but we need time to do it effectively!

— Laura Adriance, Elementary School Teacher, Shoreline



Each day I commit everything I've got to my 33 ambitious students — but there just isn't enough of me to go around. No matter how many times we ask for help, we get nothing — what mathematicians call **THE EMPTY SET**. It's overwhelming, but teaching is my passion, so when I greet my fifth-graders each day and gaze into their curious eyes, I commit to doing my all in hope that the empty set of promises will one day be filled with solutions.

— Michelle Fox, Fifth-Grade Teacher, Puyallup

Every year we are cutting smaller and smaller slivers from the pie



Take the lead.
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to Great Public Schools



I've seen teachers' anxiety level rise as we cut back everywhere



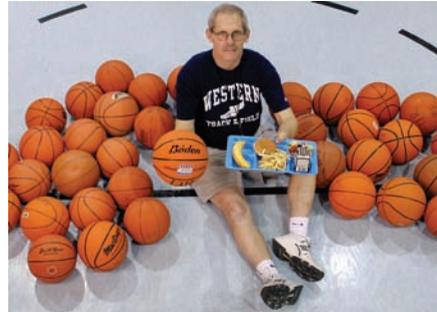
▶ **\$548 less per student**

compared to state spending in 1992



Supply budgets are so tight we are forced to limit each teacher to \$100. Even then we cut off spending by **FEBRUARY 1** to squeeze more out of less. For 16 years I've seen teachers' anxiety level rise as we cut back everywhere. We do everything we can — fund-raisers, asking parents and businesses to donate — but we need all community members to understand the energy, effort and love behind running a school with such limited resources.

— Suzanne Gottgetreu, Elementary School Office Coordinator, Tacoma



Our gym doubles as a cafeteria, and for one of my nine Physical Education classes a day we share space with the lunch crowd. Imagine the noise of 30 bouncing basketballs in conjunction with 100 children transitioning to lunch. Pretty crazy. After, I'm forced to use half the gym while the custodians clean up. My little kinders have to tiptoe around various spills yet to be cleaned up as they enter the gym at **12 O'CLOCK**.

— Erik Nosler, Elementary Physical Education Teacher, Ridgefield



I have to share 30 World Geography textbooks among 60 students — that's our realm of "making do" — having **ONE-HALF** of what students need. Without take-home resources, students depend on teachers instead of themselves for what and how they learn, and meeting all students' learning styles becomes extremely challenging. Without adequate supplies, I buy what I can afford out-of-pocket to make sure my kids have more than the minimum — but they deserve so much more.

— Mary Watts, Seventh-Grade Teacher, Federal Way



▶ **Dead last in compensation**

among the five West Coast states



I'm a **FOURTH-YEAR** professional educator and an admitted idealist, so it was very disconcerting to realize that my salary qualified my family for free or reduced-price lunch. I think about all we do for underprivileged kids . . . and then realize my own children could be considered among them. I've thought of leaving the profession because, no matter how fulfilling and important the mission, I feel guilty about my inability to save for my own children's higher education.

— *Mark Mains, Second-Grade Teacher, Mukilteo*



The extremely hard-working Instructional Assistants in my small rural community make a low wage to begin with, and now the district is cutting our pay **10 MINUTES** at a time to save money because the state will not fully fund our schools. Chipping away at my wages won't stop me from giving 110 percent of my heart and soul to my job, but it's frustrating to see the district have to make this choice.

— *Leanne Urban, Special Needs Instructional Assistant, Clarkston*



I can't afford to own a home where I teach, so I commute **90 MILES A DAY** through heavy traffic. If I change districts, all the hard work I have done will be left in the hands of someone I don't know. And what if it meant a major pay cut? I already teach guitar, sing, and work summers to pay off debt. I love my job — I get to teach kids to sing and watch their faces light up when they hit that perfect chord. But I earn less than friends who answer phones? Ridiculous.

— *Julia Dumas, Middle School Music Teacher, Bellevue*



Take the lead.
Restoring Washington's Commitment
to Great Public Schools

I feel guilty about my inability to save for my own children's higher education

► How far have Washington's schools fallen behind?

Some facts behind the numbers



Take the lead.
Restoring Washington's Commitment
to Great Public Schools

46th in class size out of 50 states and Washington, D.C.

► Washington class sizes are among the largest in the nation.

► We would need **11,659 more classroom teachers** to match the national pupil-to-teacher average.

► Reducing class sizes in early grades improves learning in all subject areas, especially for children living in poverty.

► Reducing class sizes can improve classroom behavior and give students more individualized attention. Needing less time for discipline, teachers can spend more time on instruction.

► Studies show that small classes improve teacher-student interaction and teacher morale, along with providing enriched learning experiences.

42nd in education spending out of 50 states and Washington, D.C.

► **Alabama and Arkansas spend more per student than we do in Washington.**

► New Jersey, the top state for education spending per student, spends \$3,923 more per student than we do here in Washington. Washington spends \$6,985 while New Jersey spends \$10,908 per pupil.

► If Washington spent \$2,300 more for each student we would break into the top 10 states for per-pupil spending.

► The national average for per-pupil spending is \$8,041 — \$1,056 more than Washington.

\$2 billion less for schools due to state funding not keeping pace

► Twenty-five years ago, Washington spent just over half — 50.4% — of the state Operating Budget on K-12 public education. Now we spend just 42.1%.

► These “fair share” dollars could be used to reduce class sizes, to attract and retain quality teachers, and to provide updated textbooks and technology.

► **Given that Washington has the strongest constitutional language in the country in terms of education funding — naming it the state's “paramount duty”** — it's appalling that it spends less of our state budget on education than it did 25 years ago.

\$548 less per student compared with 1992

► Inflation has risen each year along with the demands for increased student achievement. Yet, today's schools are asked to do more with less. That's unacceptable.

► With funding eroding, schools have less to invest in technology, textbooks and other instructional materials needed for our children to develop the skills necessary to compete for good jobs in the global, high-tech economy.

► Schools lack the resources to restore or expand enrichment programs, like music or art, or to help students meet the state's high standards and graduation requirements.

Dead last in compensation among the five West Coast states

► The average salary paid to Washington's classroom teachers lags far behind what is paid to all classroom teachers in West Coast states (California, Oregon, Washington, Alaska and Hawaii) — \$9,552 less! . . . and it is \$2,084 below the national average.

► Last year, our teacher salaries slipped further behind West Coast and national averages than in the prior year.

► From 1992 to 2005, the average salary paid to Washington's Education Support Professionals (ESP) fell further behind per-capita income in the state and lost more purchasing power because of inflation.

► Competitive salaries are key to attracting and retaining high-quality teachers. After five years of teaching, one in three has left the profession.

Source material:

46th IN CLASS SIZE

• NEA Rankings and Estimates Update, Fall 2005 using data provided by state departments of education.

• Finn, Jeremy, Class Size Reduction in Grades K-3 from “School Reform Proposals: The Research Evidence,” Editor: Alex Molnar, Education Policy Research Unit, Arizona State University, January 2002 — <http://www.nea-nm.org/PDF/epru-2002-101.pdf>

• Deutsch, Francine M., “How small classes benefit high school students,” National Association of Secondary School Principals, NASSP Bulletin, June 2003 — http://www.findarticles.com/p/articles/mi_qa3696/is_200306/ai_n9287449

42nd IN EDUCATION SPENDING

• Editorial Projects in Education Research Center, 2006, Vol. 25, Issue 17, web only. Washington State ranks 42nd in the nation in “per pupil expenditures, adjusted for regional cost differences (2003)” — http://www.edweek.org/ew/qc/2006/multiple_state_data.html. Annual Pre-K-12 Expenditure data: NCES, “Revenues and Expenditures for Public Elementary and Secondary Education: School Year 2002-03.”

\$2 BILLION LESS FOR SCHOOLS

• Washington State Legislative Budget Notes. <http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/1991-93partiii.pdf>
<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/lbns/2005appendix.pdf>

\$548 LESS PER STUDENT

• OSPI and U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics as published in the League of Education Voters Report, “Turning Promise into Practice: A Quality Education for Every Washington Student,” January 2006.

DEAD LAST IN COMPENSATION

• NEA Rankings and Estimates Update, Fall 2005 using data provided by state departments of education.

• “A Different Approach to Solving the Teacher Shortage Problem,” Teaching Quality Policy Briefs, Number 3, January 2001 http://depts.washington.edu/ctpmail/PDFs/Brief_three.pdf

• SPI, “Preparing Washington Students for the 21st Century: Five-Year Strategic Plan for the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction, 2002-2007,” January 2003. <http://www.k12.wa.us/AboutUs/strategicplan.pdf>

• CPI-U for Seattle-Tacoma-Bremerton and per-capita income figures based on school year estimates derived from Forecast Council figures contained in the Sept. 2005 “Washington Economic and Revenue Forecast.” Average salary figures from OSPI.

ALL PHOTOGRAPHY: DALE FOLKERTS, WEA COMMUNICATIONS

What's *your* story behind the numbers?

We're going to need it.

The first (and one of the most important) task of our **Take the lead** campaign to restore Washington's commitment to great public schools is to make as many people across the state aware of the magnitude of harm caused by inadequate funding. The task is twofold, and we need your help:

1 **HELP SPREAD THE WORD ABOUT THE NUMBERS BEHIND THE GROWING EDUCATION FUNDING CRISIS** as often and widely as possible. Find out more at: www.taketheleadwashington.org

2 **SEND US YOUR PERSONAL STORY BEHIND THE NUMBERS** — like the stories in this publication. Personal stories are the most compelling way to convey the reality behind the numbers to public officials, parents, fellow school employees, and friends and family. Include your own personal “number” that illustrates the challenges you face as well as the passion, dedication, creativity and resourcefulness that public school employees bring to work every day. Each additional perspective we gather will strengthen the voice of change — each will help to make the **Take the lead** campaign more successful. Please e-mail your story today to: stories@taketheleadwashington.org or call **800-622-3393** and ask for “WEA Communications.”



Take the lead.

Restoring Washington's Commitment to Great Public Schools

Look for regular updates on the **Take the lead** campaign in WE.

Washington ranks . . .

- ▶ **46th** nationally in class size.
- ▶ **42nd** nationally in education spending.
- ▶ **Dead last in compensation** among the five West Coast states.

We spend . . .

- ▶ **\$548 less per student** than we did in 1992.

We would have . . .

- ▶ **\$2 billion more for schools** if our state had kept pace with funding.



Take the lead.

*Restoring Washington's Commitment
to Great Public Schools*



P.O. Box 9100, Federal Way, WA 98063-9100

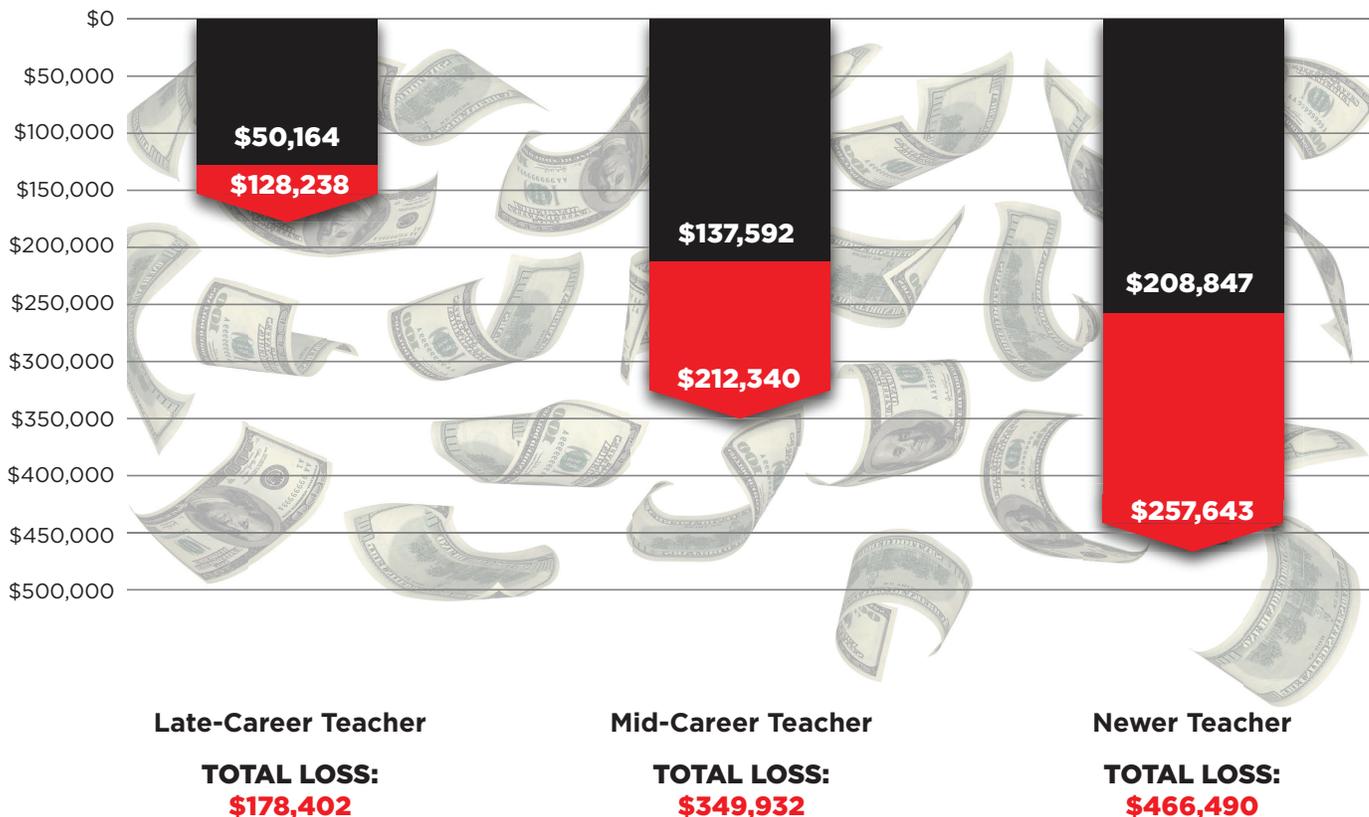
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Lifetime Earnings Lost to Legislative Action

What the Teacher Tax Will Cost You

Salaries and Pension Reductions Imposed by the Legislature, 2010-11 through retirement

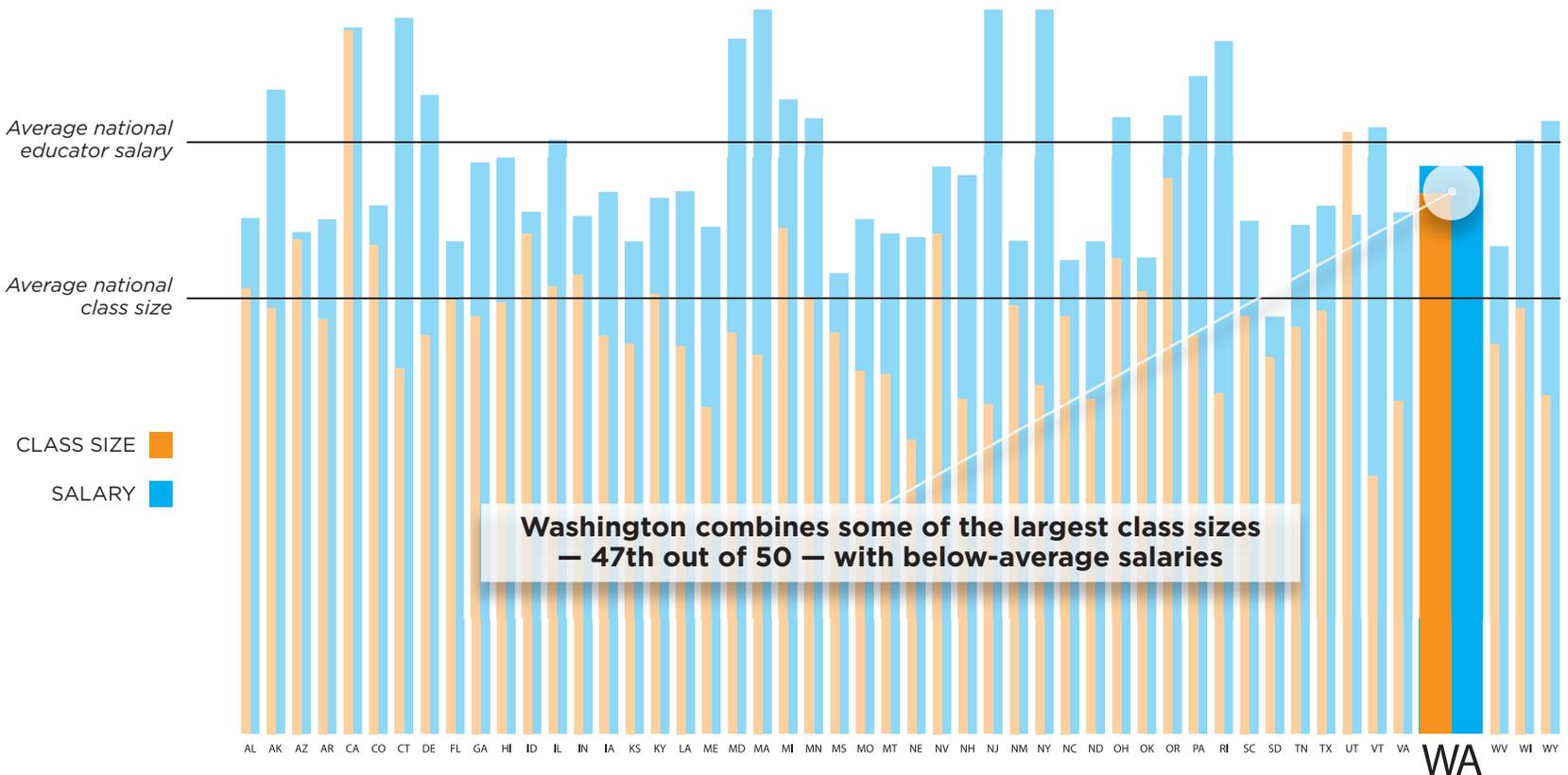
- Newer teachers in Washington have already lost almost \$260,000 over their lifetimes thanks to legislative pay cuts.
- Now, Legislators want to reduce teachers' pay again, taking an additional \$209,000 from each newer teacher.
- If the Proposed House Budget is adopted, the cuts that have *already* been made PLUS the new cuts will amount to a lifetime loss of nearly \$470,000 for each newer teacher in Washington.



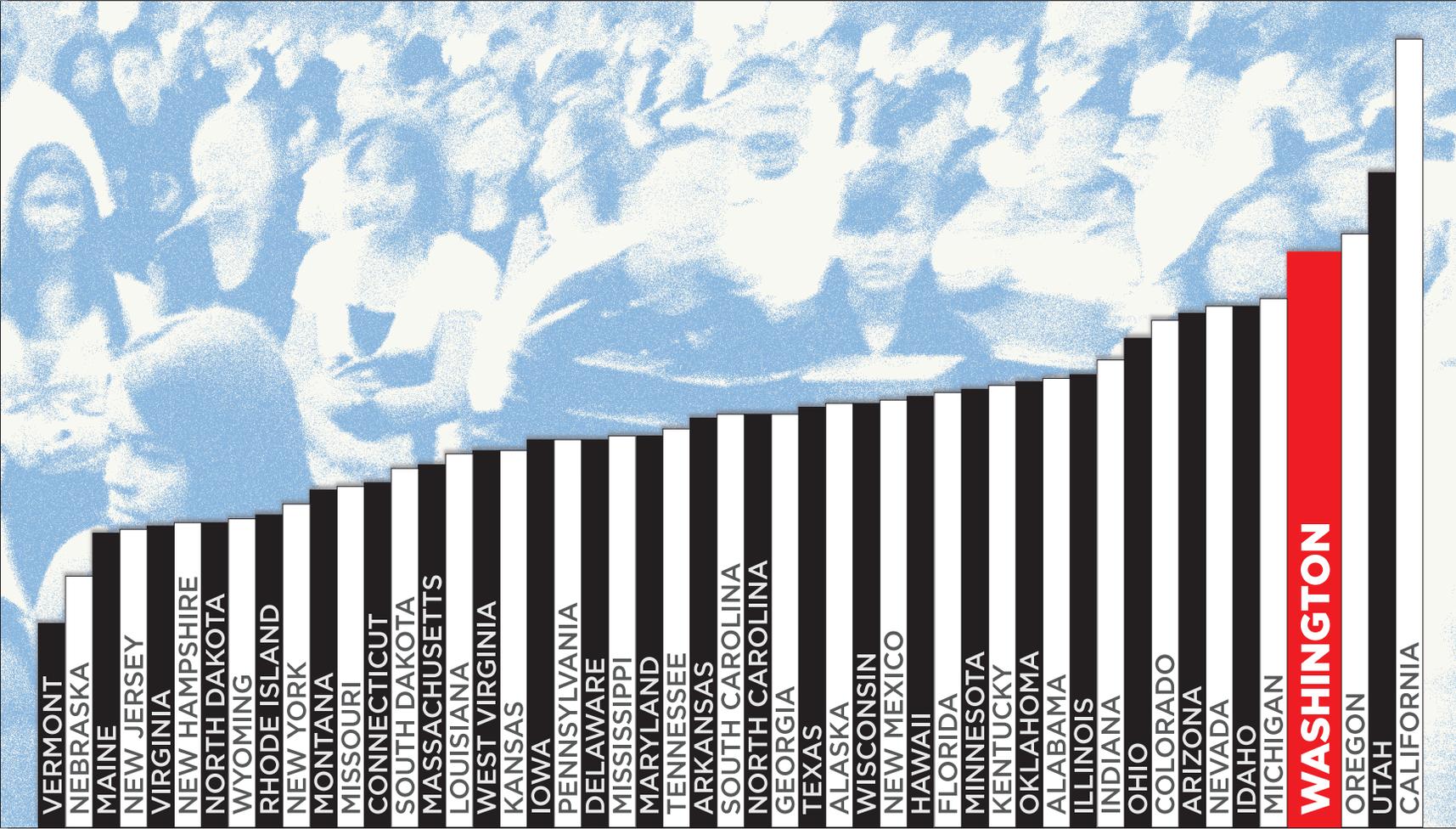
■ = Pay cuts that have already happened

■ = Proposed new cuts to teacher pay

Washington has above-average class sizes and below-average educator salaries



Washington ranks 47th out of 50 states in class sizes

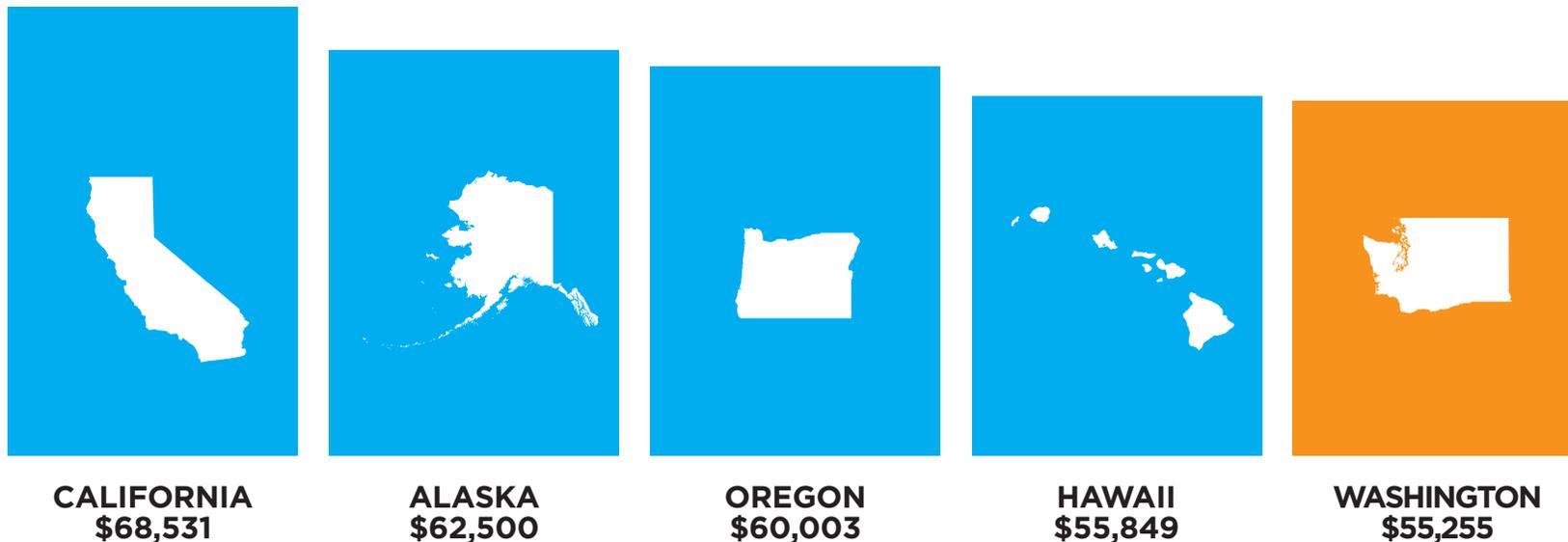


Fewest students per teacher → Most students per teacher

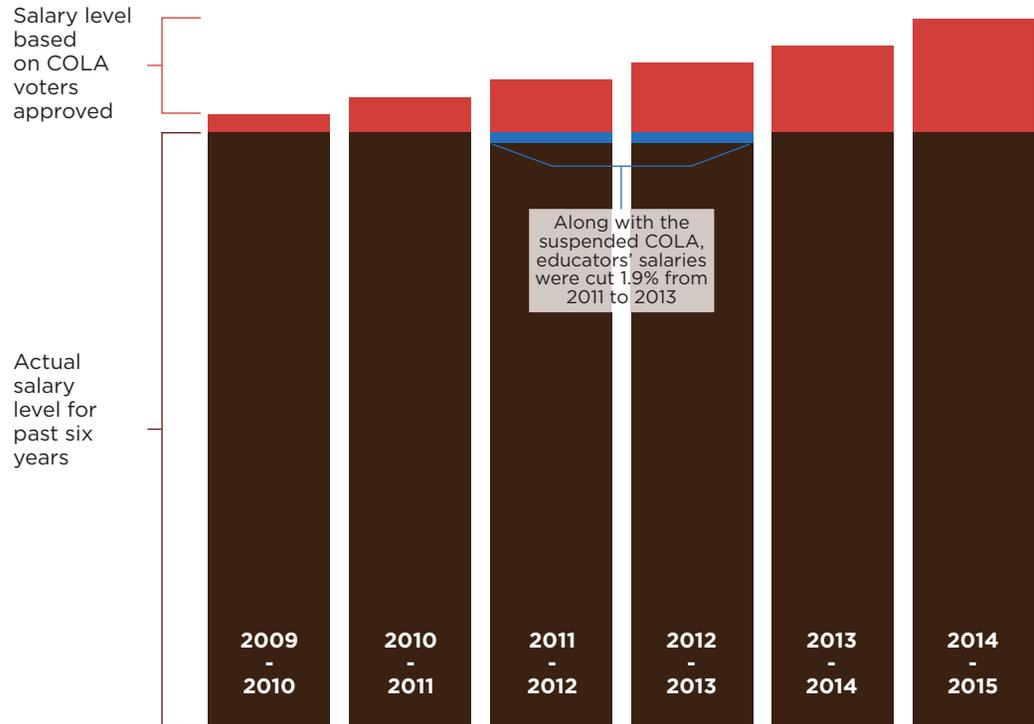


Washington ranks last among the Pacific states in educator salaries

Salary is one of the most important factors in attracting — and keeping — quality educators to work in our children’s classrooms. But just as Washington lags behind most of the nation in class size, it trails the five Pacific states in educator compensation, making it that much more difficult for us to compete for the best talent.



In 2014, the COLA suspension will cost Washington educators 16% in lost salary



2000

By a nearly 2-to-1 margin, voters approve I-732 to pay educators an annual cost-of-living adjustment or COLA.

2002

State Supreme Court upholds state-funded I-732 COLA for *all* educators.

2008

Legislature suspends COLA.

2014

With COLA now suspended for six years, educator salary loss reaches 16% annually.

Meanwhile, as the cost of fuel, food and other services rise, educators struggle to make ends meet as their earning power declines.