

April 30, 2025

The Honorable Bob Ferguson
Governor, State of Washington
P.O. Box 40002
Olympia, WA 98504-0002

Transmitted electronically to Bob.Ferguson@GOV.wa.gov

Dear Governor Ferguson,

On behalf of the membership organizations listed below and Olympic Peninsula Democrats Senator Mike Chapman and Representative Adam Bernbaum, we are writing to request a veto of House Bill 2050.

The bill titled "Implementing K-12 Savings and Efficiencies" proposes to save \$9.6 million during the 2025-27 biennium, but it primarily targets eight school districts with significant populations of students enrolled in Alternative Learning Experience (ALE) programs. Instead of "promoting efficiency," the cuts to these vital Local Effort Assistance (LEA) funds will actually undermine the quality of education for vulnerable students who rely on these programs.

When the bills emerged in the Legislature this session (SB 5772 was introduced and passed the Senate 27-22), there were many reasons given for reducing LEA in districts that have 33% of their students enrolled in online or remote learning programs. None of these reasons were discussed in a policy committee such as the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee or the House Education Committee.

A common complaint was that ALE students should be attending school in their own community and that these districts didn't need the funding. Unfortunately, those comments and others ignored the fact that many students (and their families) choose ALE programs precisely because they were not successful in brick-and-mortar schools, have medical conditions that keep them out of the general population, have behavioral and mental health concerns, are emerging NCAA athletes, or suffer from depression and anxiety.

Instead of allowing for a robust policy debate over the merits or shortcomings of ALE programs, the bill was positioned as a way to save the state money in this tough budget year and as an offset to increases that were being made to special education and school operations (MSOC) funding.

These are small, rural school districts that have higher than the state average of students qualifying for free and reduced price meals. However, since they do not offer school meals to online or remote students, these districts are not eligible to receive state Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds and do not qualify for federal Title I (poverty) funding, funds which support intervention services and credit retrieval programs. Districts use their state LEA funding to support these interventions to help their students succeed.

In addition, the targeted school districts are in property poor areas that don't generate large local enrichment levies. For example, the Valley School District north of Spokane, Washington has a population of under 200 people. The district's levy is just \$152,000, which is matched by about \$900,000 in levy equalization. At the 33% reduction rate, the district stands to lose \$300,000 in LEA, which will result in layoffs for classroom teachers, intervention teachers, paraeducators, and administrative staff who live in the community and surrounding areas.

It is also important to remember that ALE students generate less state apportionment per student: 85 cents for an ALE student compared to \$1.00 for each “in person” general education student. Therefore, districts start with less money to begin with for these ALE students. And this bill does not target *all ALE students* – A much larger school district could have as many students enrolled in ALE programs as one of the eight, but because of its size the percentage doesn’t reach the arbitrary 33% threshold in this bill.

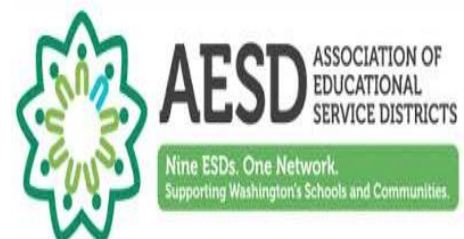
HB 2050 penalizes school districts for serving the very students who need the additional support the most. It reduces access to the same interventions and enhancements that are standard in brick-and-mortar schools. If there is a policy conversation to be had by the state Legislature regarding online and ALE programs, we hope you will agree that it deserves the time, discussion and debate starting first in the policy committees.

And while the bill purports to have some “savings” for the 2025-27 biennium, vetoing this bill will have a small impact on the overall \$78 billion operating budget. Conversely, by vetoing House Bill 2050, you will make a huge difference to eight small, rural school districts and their students. (The list of affected districts is found below our signatures.)

Respectfully,

**EASTERN
WASHINGTON
QUALITY
SCHOOLS
COALITION**

A Coalition of 50 school districts
in North Central and Northeastern
Washington



The Honorable Mike Chapman
Washington State Senate
24th Legislative District

The Honorable Adam Bernbaum
Washington State House of Representatives
24th Legislative District

CC: Shane Esquibel, Interim Chief of Staff
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Information provided by OSPI February 24, 2025:

	CY 2025	Bill Impact	New LEA	% of Change
00000 State Totals:	\$19,410,006.68	\$(8,474,463.00)	\$10,935,543.68	-43.66%
21234 Boistfort	\$121,282.36	\$(111,720.00)	\$9,562.36	-92.12%
20404 Goldendale	\$3,636,473.12	\$(2,042,845.00)	\$1,593,628.12	-56.18%
23311 Mary M Knight	\$1,239,935.96	\$(609,936.00)	\$629,999.96	-49.19%
24019 Omak	\$10,263,065.00	\$(4,054,444.00)	\$6,208,621.00	-39.51%
16048 Quilcene	\$273,800.40	\$(222,244.00)	\$51,556.40	-81.17%
05402 Quillayute Valley	\$3,028,534.34	\$(1,187,975.00)	\$1,840,559.34	-39.23%
33070 Valley (Spokane area)	\$803,087.99	\$(294,655.00)	\$508,432.99	-36.69%
24915 Paschal Sherman Tribal	\$43,827.51	\$23,609.00	\$20,218.51	53.87%