

Lynden School District No. 504
Resolution #02-25

WHEREAS public education is recognized as the paramount duty under the Washington State Constitution, and the proposed Senate Bills (SB 5180, SB 5181, SB 5179, SB 5123) and House Bill 1296 undermine trust in public education by centralizing authority, restricting local flexibility, undermining the authority granted to duly elected school board directors under RCW 28A.150.230, and eroding parental rights; and

WHEREAS House Bill 1296, titled "Promoting a Safe and Supportive Public Education System," claims to enhance student, parental, and employee rights in public education by emphasizing safety, free access to public education, and privacy, while mandating school districts to align policies with these priorities; and

WHEREAS concerns have been raised that nothing can be done to prevent staff and teachers from discussing controversial topics with students, leading some stakeholders to worry that state-level mandates may infringe on parental rights and local flexibility; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5181 aligns with the Parents' Rights Initiative by outlining parents' rights to access their children's educational records and engage in school activities, but its provisions limit parental authority or access to information if procedures are perceived as restrictive. The inclusion of an emergency clause prevents the bill from being subject to a referendum, which could undermine the public's ability to challenge the law democratically; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5180 mandates that all public schools in Washington adopt gender-inclusive policies to ensure a safe and respectful learning environment, updating policy 3211. This bill would hamper efforts to amend to include parental rights; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5179 establishes a punitive, unfunded, unworkable, and administratively burdensome complaint process for noncompliance with state education laws, including civil rights, nondiscrimination, harassment, curriculum requirements, and student discipline, and authorizes the withholding of funds for noncompliance; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5123 expands protections in Washington public schools by prohibiting discrimination based on ethnicity, homelessness, immigration status, and neurodivergence, while further defining protected classes related to sexual orientation, gender expression, and gender identity; and

WHEREAS some may be concerned that such expanded protections could impose state-level policies that limit local flexibility; and

WHEREAS the Lynden School District recognizes the worth and value in every student and believes that additional legislation stating these principles is unnecessary and may cause further controversy where none should exist; and

WHEREAS House Bill 1296 consolidates provisions from SB 5180, SB 5179, and SB 5181 into a unified approach to student safety, rights, and educational policies. While aimed at improving public education, this consolidation could expedite the implementation of broad changes, limiting public debate and scrutiny of individual provisions; and

WHEREAS the emergency clause in House Bill 1296 prevents a referendum, denying voters the opportunity to challenge or repeal the law through direct democratic means, which has already generated significant controversy given that Initiative 2081 passed last session with bipartisan support. This undermines the efforts of over 454,000 Washingtonians who signed in favor of the initiative; and

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WHEREAS these bills collectively threaten the foundational principles of public education by imposing unfunded mandates, diminishing local flexibility, and undermining the voices of families and communities; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5263 aims to increase the funding multiplier to help adequately fund special education, thereby supporting the needs of students requiring special education services; and

WHEREAS Senate Bill 5192 seeks to increase allocations for materials, supplies, and operating costs by 10%, ensures these funds are used exclusively for their intended purposes, and requires school districts to report expenditures to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction; and

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that we, the Lynden School Board, strongly urge legislators to reject Senate Bills 5180, 5181, 5179, 5123, and House Bill 1296 in their current forms. We call on our elected representatives to prioritize legislation that preserves local flexibility, protects parental rights, and fosters trust within our public education system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we express our support for Senate Bill 5263, which seeks to increase the funding multiplier to adequately fund special education, ensuring that all students receive the support and resources they need to succeed.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that we support Senate Bill 5192, which increases allocations for materials, supplies, and operating costs, mandates the exclusive use of these funds for their intended purposes, and requires school districts to report expenditures to the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, thereby promoting transparency and accountability in the use of public funds.

Adopted by the BOARD OF DIRECTORS of the Lynden School District No. 504 in a meeting held on February 6, 2025.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Jim Verburg, President

Ken Owsley, Vice President

Tonya Hickman, Legislative Representative

Khush Brar

Danny Martinez

Attested by:

David VanderYacht, Superintendent and
Secretary to the Board