

Class 4

How school systems are organized

A look at the action behind the classroom experience

July 11, 2024

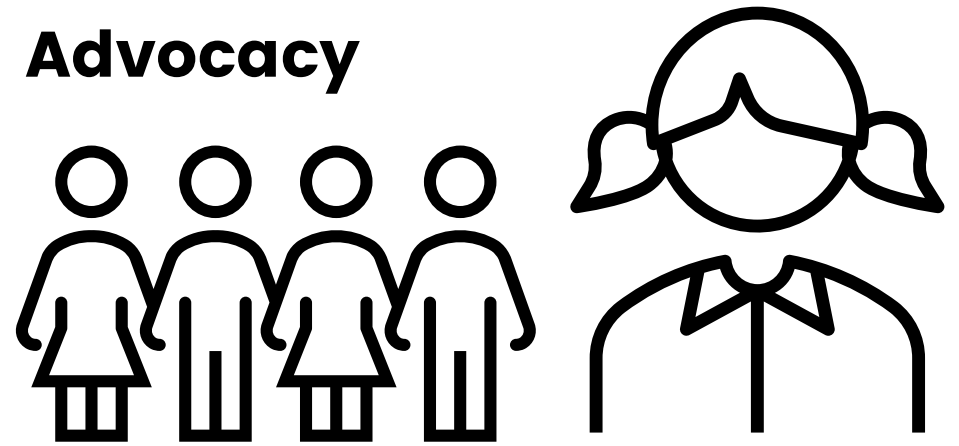


Navigate? Or change?

Public education can seem basic, with a chain of command: Classroom teacher, principal, district administration.

But it is complex, with agencies and groups you may not be aware of influencing what happens in your child's class.

Advocacy



Are navigating the system, trying to get help for your child/student?
Or, do you want to changes how things are done for lots of students?

Advocacy considerations

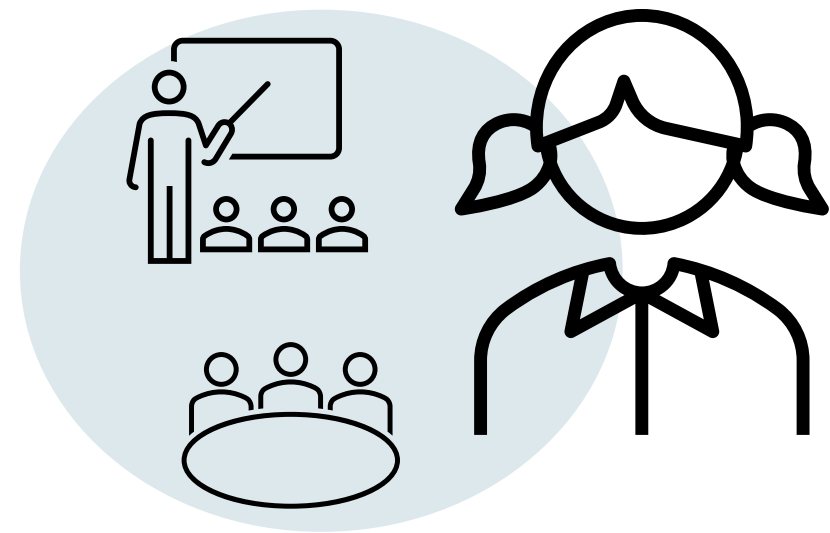
Are you trying to secure a specific opportunity or support? **This is system navigation**

With special education services, you will engage with:

- Individual Education Program (IEP) team
- Class teacher

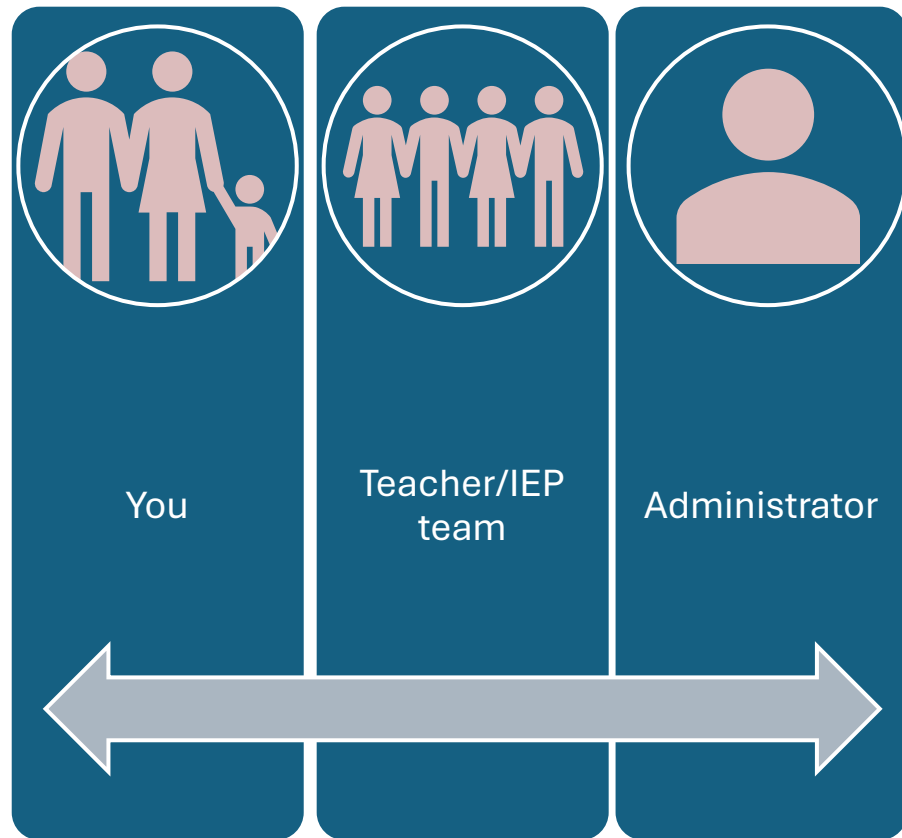
If you need to escalate up, you will engage with administrators

Individual child

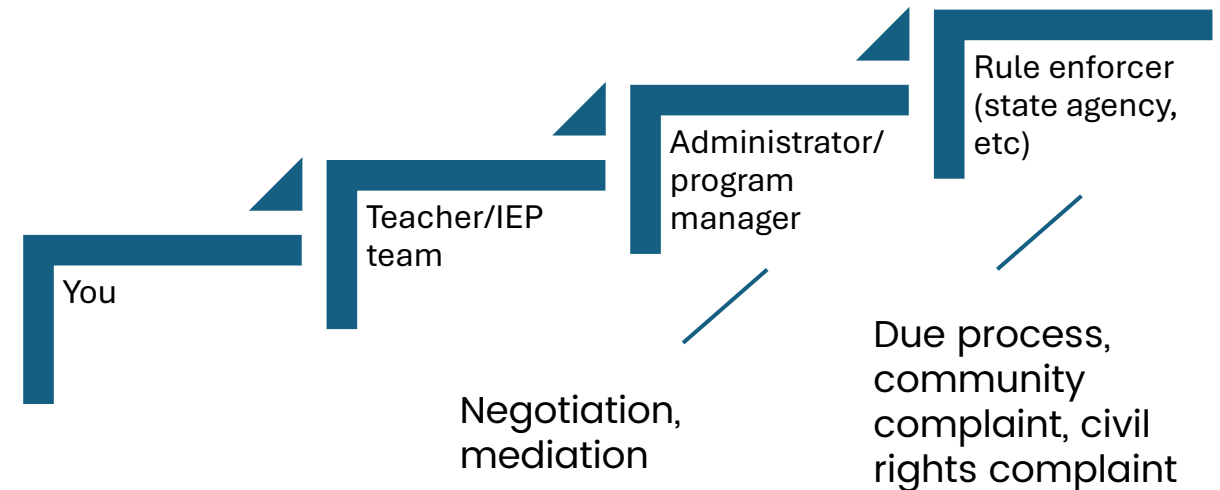


Focus: Direct benefit to the student

Individual outcomes/navigation



This is about navigating the system and (when needed) escalating up



A big challenge is keeping the focus on what the child needs (not the system!)

Person thinking vs systems thinking

Person-centered

Focus: What someone wants for themselves

System works for the person who needs support

Puts the person first

Focuses on strengths

Social model

Developed by self-advocates and their allies

System-centered

Focus: What others want for a person who needs support

Tries to make a person who needs support act “better” for the system

Puts the person last

Focuses on deficits

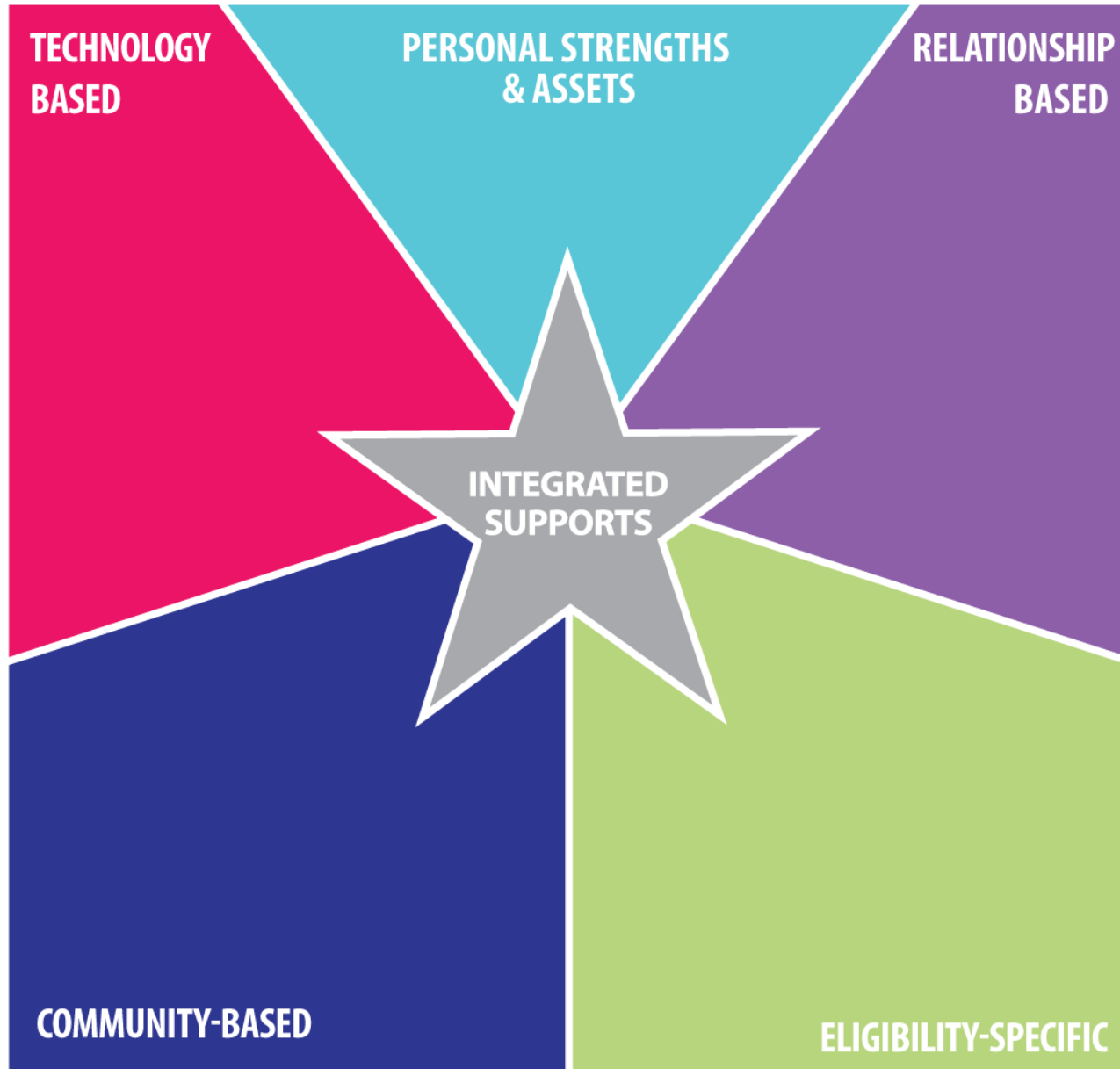
Medical model

Developed by agencies and governments

Person-centered approach

- Person-Centered Planning is a vision-building process and future planning tool used to discover the kind of life a person desires, creates a plan for how their dreams may be achieved, and identifies ways to access needed supports and services.
- The focus is always on the vision of what the person would like to be and do. The planning focuses on the strengths of the person rather than his/her weaknesses.
- [The Arc of King County: Person Centered Planning](#)





MAISIE AGE 5
Teach me to read

IMPORTANT THINGS

- Her cat Bruno
- Helping and being helpful
- Knowing what happens every day
- Being with her friends
- Having Christmas when she has her bag!

STRENGTHS

- LOVES to read
- Can count to 30
- Social and kind
- Funny
- Happy
- Loves to Dance
- Loves her Friends
- Fast Learner

HOW SUPPORT ME

- Allow me to have my own things
- Ask me questions
- Give her lots of encouragement

Paul's One Page Profile

What people love about me

- I am great at giving hugs
- I am very good at numbers
- I am very good at puzzles
- I am interested in how things work
- my smile
- my laugh

My Hopes & Wishes

- to be happy
- to be healthy
- to make friends and have good relationships
- to enjoy nursery / school
- to be independent
- to reach my potential

Things I love

- being outside
- puzzles
- messy play
- bubbles
- animals
- chocolate cake
- counting to ten

The best ways to support me

- I need visuals to support me to understand what is happening
- I need time to process instructions
- Language needs to be short and clear
- Words are still hard for me so please pay attention to my body language
- Eating is hard for me I may need extra time and food put directly into my hand
- I am still in nappies and need help with dressing

Advocacy considerations

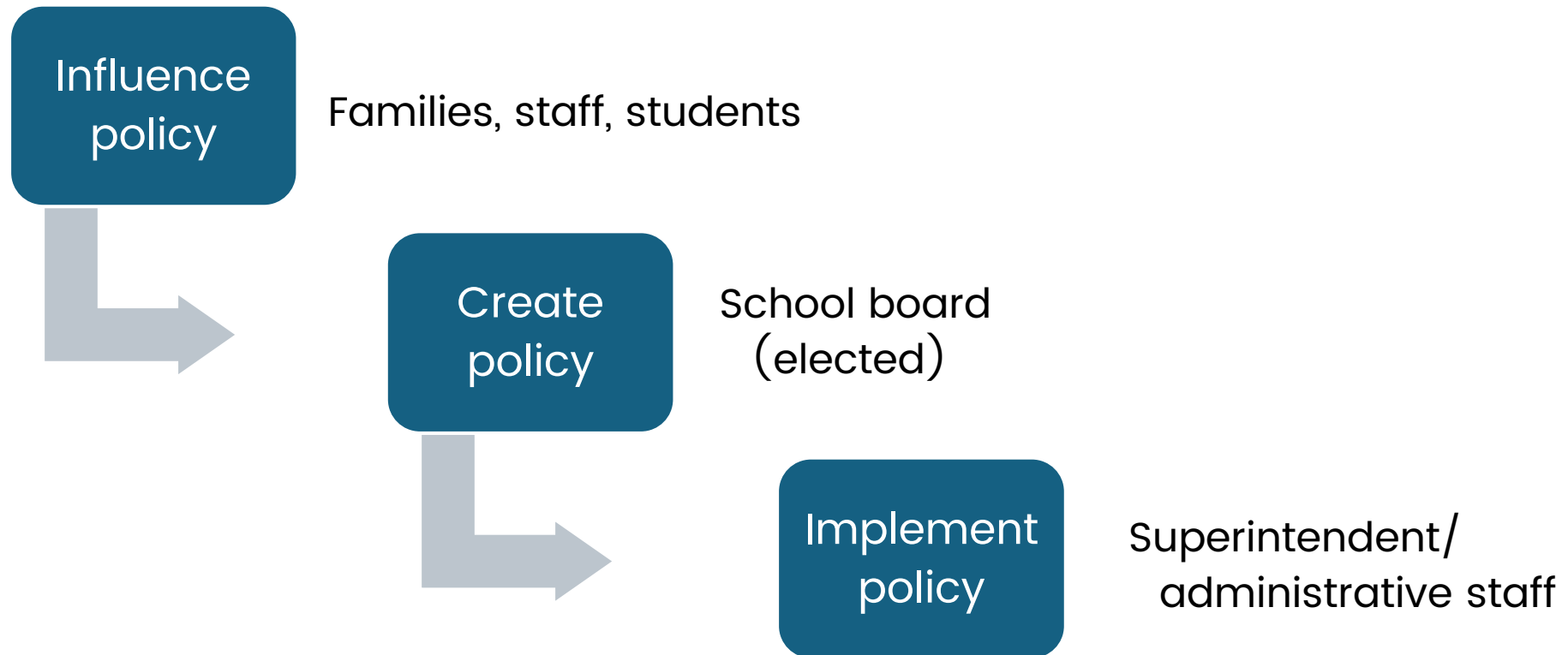
- ▶ Are you trying to change school, district or program practice?
- ▶ Are you trying to secure or influence resources for all or a group of students?
- ▶ These are usually governance issues and involve public policy and budget. You are taking on **system change**.
- ▶ Governing entities make these decisions. Locally, that is the school board; at the state level it is the state legislature, or it might be a state agency

System change

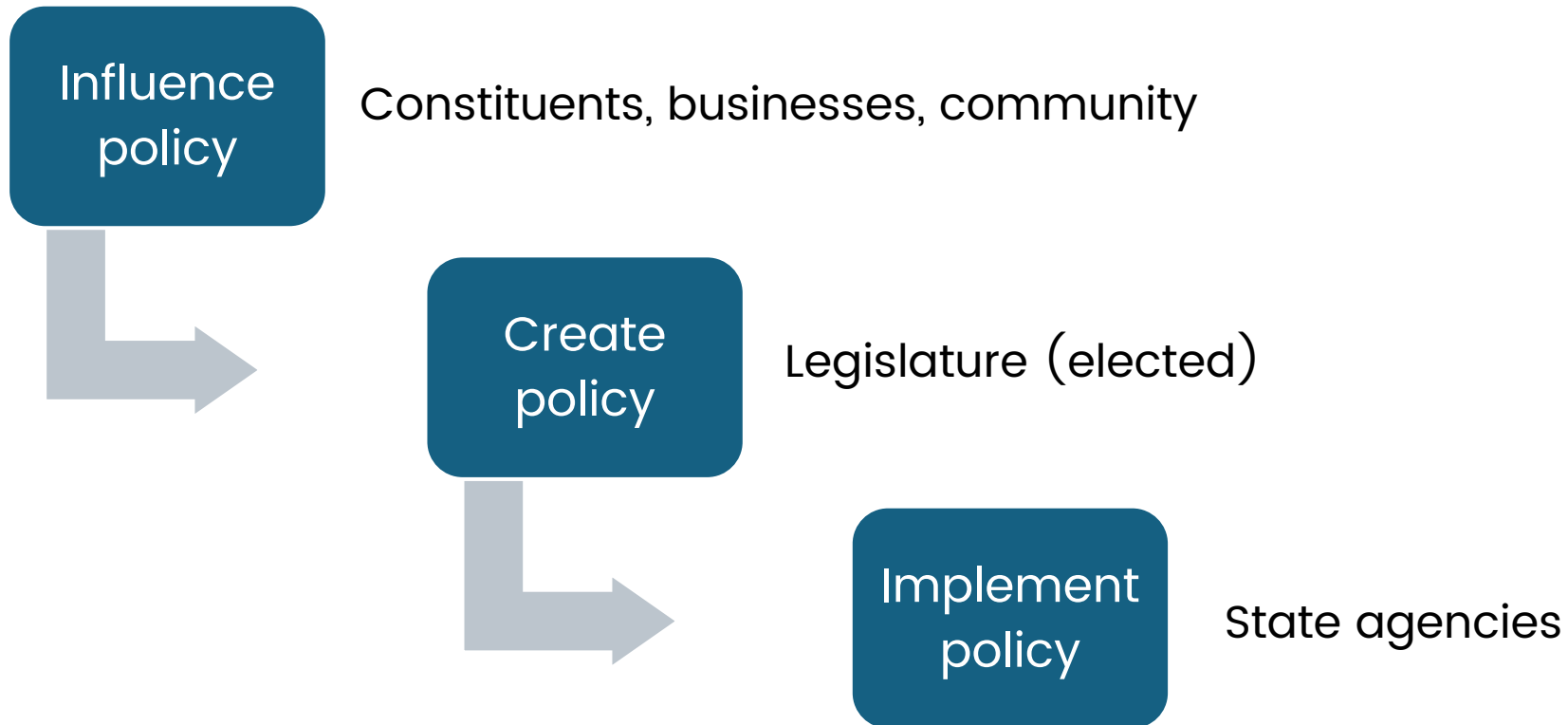


Focus: Changing how the system works: rules, laws, funding, practice

Systems change/local



Systems change/state



Visualizing our school system

Schools

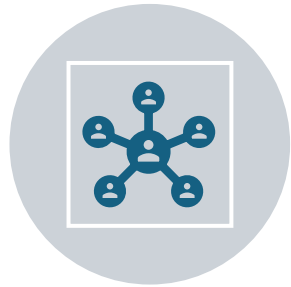
Site leadership

School District/Board

State

Federal

Visualizing our school system



Site leadership: Principal, building leadership teams, informal influencers (PTA)



School district: Board sets policy; administration implements



State: Legislature sets policy; agencies (like the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction) implement



Federal: Congress sets policy; US Department of Education implements

Players behind the scenes

Regional:

**Education
service**

districts link
school districts
to resources.
No governance
or rulemaking

In addition to State Legislature:

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction – allocates funding and provides tools, resources, and technical assistance. Writes rules that implement legislative policy

State Board of Education – Develops policies related to graduation and school improvement

Professional Education Standards Board – Develops policies and requirements for becoming a teacher or paraeducator

Washington State School Directors Association – support for local school boards. Often writes sample policies

Decision making

Principals and school staff

District superintendent

State agencies

US ED

Oversight

School boards, district leaders

Legislature

State agencies

OEO, DRW

US ED, US
Justice

OEO = Office of the
Education
Ombuds. Resource
for conflict
resolution and
understanding
rights

DRW – Disability
Rights Washington.
Protection and
advocacy for
people with
disabilities.

School director responsibilities

“Each common school district board of directors, whether or not acting through its respective administrative staff, be held accountable for the proper operation of their district to the local community and its electorate.”

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/RCW/default.aspx?cite=28A.150.230>

- Establish performance criteria and an evaluation process for staff and curriculum;
- Determine the final assignment of staff;
- Provide information to the local community and its electorate describing the school district's policies concerning hiring, assigning, terminating, and evaluating staff, including the criteria for evaluating teachers and principals;
- Determine instructional hours for a quality education, in not less than state's minimum
- Determine the allocation of staff time
- Establish final curriculum standards
- Evaluate teaching materials

Funding



State allocations - “basic education” as well as other investments

Local levies
(renew every few years)

Federal funding
(IDEA, Title I, etc)

Grants,
fees

Did you know? Basic education funds are “protected” – that means they can only be reduced for a policy reason. Not to save money

Citizen’s Guide to K-12 Finance
https://leg.wa.gov/Senate/Committees/WM/Documents/Citizen%27s%20guides/K12%20Booklet_2024%20Update%20Final.pdf

What is “basic education”

Washington’s constitution says funding education is the state’s **paramount duty**.

The courts told the state legislature it needed to define a basic program of education and fund it.

WA passed the Basic Education Act in 1977; it has since updated the definition

Includes goals, number of hours/days, and a mix of course offerings that school districts must provide.

Includes:

- General apportionment
- Special education services
- Student transportation
- Learning assistance program (LAP) for remediation
- Transitional bilingual instruction program (TBIP)
- Highly capable program
- Education in juvenile detention centers and state institutions

What is “basic education”

“A basic education is an **evolving** program of instruction that is intended to provide students with the **opportunity** to become responsible and respectful global citizens, to contribute to their economic well-being and that of their families and communities, to explore and understand different perspectives, and to enjoy productive and satisfying lives. “

- (1) Read with comprehension, write effectively, and communicate successfully in a variety of ways and settings and with a variety of audiences;
- (2) Know and apply the core concepts and principles of mathematics; social, physical, and life sciences; civics and history, including different cultures and participation in representative government; geography; arts; and health and fitness;
- (3) Think analytically, logically, and creatively, and to integrate technology literacy and fluency as well as different experiences and knowledge to form reasoned judgments and solve problems; and
- (4) Understand the importance of work and finance and how performance, effort, and decisions directly affect future career and educational opportunities.

What is “basic education”

<https://app.leg.wa.gov/rcw/default.aspx?cite=28A.150>

1000 hours of instruction, grades K-8

1080 hours of instruction, grades 9-12

180 days of instruction

Instruction in state learning standards

Opportunity to complete 24 credits for high school graduation

Ratio: 46 basic education instructional staff for every 1000 full time students

Costs associated with running schools

General apportionment

The state legislature established prototypes.

Prototypes illustrate a level of resources to operate a school of a particular size with particular types and grade levels of students

Allocations to school districts are based on actual full-time equivalent (FTE) student enrollment

Factors that go into the formula:

- Class size, staff to student ratios
- Types of staff (teachers; counselors, etc)
- Districtwide support (technology, maintenance)
- Materials, supplies, operating costs (textbooks; security; utilities, etc)
- Staff pay level (experience, regionalization/local cost of living)

All the factors go into the formula; it arrives at a **per student allocation**, unique to each school district

Table 1: Class Sizes

Grade	Class Size
Grades K-3	17
Grades 4-6	27
Grades 7-8	28.53
Grades 9-12	28.74
Career & Tech. Ed (CTE) 7-8	23
CTE 9-12	23
Skills Centers	19
Lab Science	19.98

Length of teacher day is assumed to be 5.6 hours in elementary school and 6.0 hours in middle and high school. Planning time is assumed to be 45 minutes per day in elementary school and 60 minutes in high school.

Table 2: Staffing	Elementary School	Middle School	High School
<i>Prototypical school size:</i>			
Number of students	400	432	600
<i>Staff per-school:</i>			
Principals/administrators	1.2530	1.3530	1.8800
Librarian/media specialist	0.6630	0.5190	0.5230
School nurses	0.416	0.612	0.582
Social workers	0.222	0.060	0.089
Psychologists	0.075	0.016	0.035
Guidance counselors	0.827	1.550	2.882
Instructional aides	0.9360	0.7000	0.6520
Office support & non-instructional aides	2.0120	2.3250	3.2690
Custodians	1.6570	1.9420	2.9650
Classified staff for student & staff safety	0.0790	0.0920	0.1410
Parent involvement coordinators	0.0825	0.0000	0.0000

Table 4: Budgeted Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC)

MSOC Component	Per-Student Allocation SY 2023-24	Per-Student Allocation SY 2024-25
Technology	\$178.98	\$182.72
Utilities and insurance	416.26	425.01
Curriculum and textbooks	164.48	167.94
Other supplies	326.54	333.4
Library materials	22.65	23.13
Instructional professional development for certified and classified staff	25.44	25.97
Facilities' maintenance	206.22	210.55
Security and central office	142.87	145.87
Total	\$1,483.44	\$1,514.59
Students in grades 9-12	\$1,683.67	\$1,719.02
Students in CTE & skill center programs	\$1,724.62	\$1,760.84

Special education funding

Per student allocation

X

By special education multiplier*

X

special education students**

=

Special education allocation

* Multiplier is tiered:

1.12 for students 80% or more in general ed

1.06 for students less than 80% in general ed

** # students capped at 16% of FTE students

For K-12: Districts use both general education funding AND special education funding to educate students with IEPs

Preschool special education funding:

120% X per student allocation for district

Note: preschool is not part of basic education There is no “general apportionment.”

Who influences school districts?

Washington State
School Directors
Association
(WSSDA)



Local
school boards

Office of the
Superintendent of
Public Instruction
(OSPI)



Local school district
administration

WSSDA

Washington State School Directors Association

What is it?

- An association of school board directors

How are they funded?

- Annual dues based on a sliding scale

What do they do?

- Create model policies for school districts
- Provide training to school board members
- Advocate on behalf of members to the state legislature
- Offer legal and policy guidance to members

Model policies are widely adopted

Bellevue School District 3241

The purposes of this policy and accompanying procedure include:

- Engaging with school personnel, students, parents, families, and the community in decisions related to the development and implementation of discipline policies and procedures
- Supporting students in meeting behavioral expectations, including providing for early involvement of parents and families
- Administering discipline in ways that respond to the needs and strengths of students and keep students in the classroom to the maximum extent possible
- Providing educational services that students need to complete their education without disruption

WSSDA 3241

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Model policies are widely adopted

Spokane Policy 3211

The board believes in fostering an educational environment that is safe and free of discrimination for all students, regardless of gender expression, gender identity, or sex. To that end, the board recognizes the importance of an inclusive approach toward transgender and gender-expansive students with regard to key terms, communication and the use of names and pronouns, student records, confidential health and education information, communication, restroom and locker room use and accessibility, sports and physical education, dress codes and other school activities, in order to provide these students with an equal opportunity for learning and achievement.

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Why Do districts use WSSDA model policies?

- They assume WSSDA policy will protect the district from liability/lawsuits
- It costs less than hiring their own policy makers
- Rural districts do not have the resources that larger districts do



OSPI

Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction

What is it?

- Primary agency charged with overseeing public K–12 education in Washington state

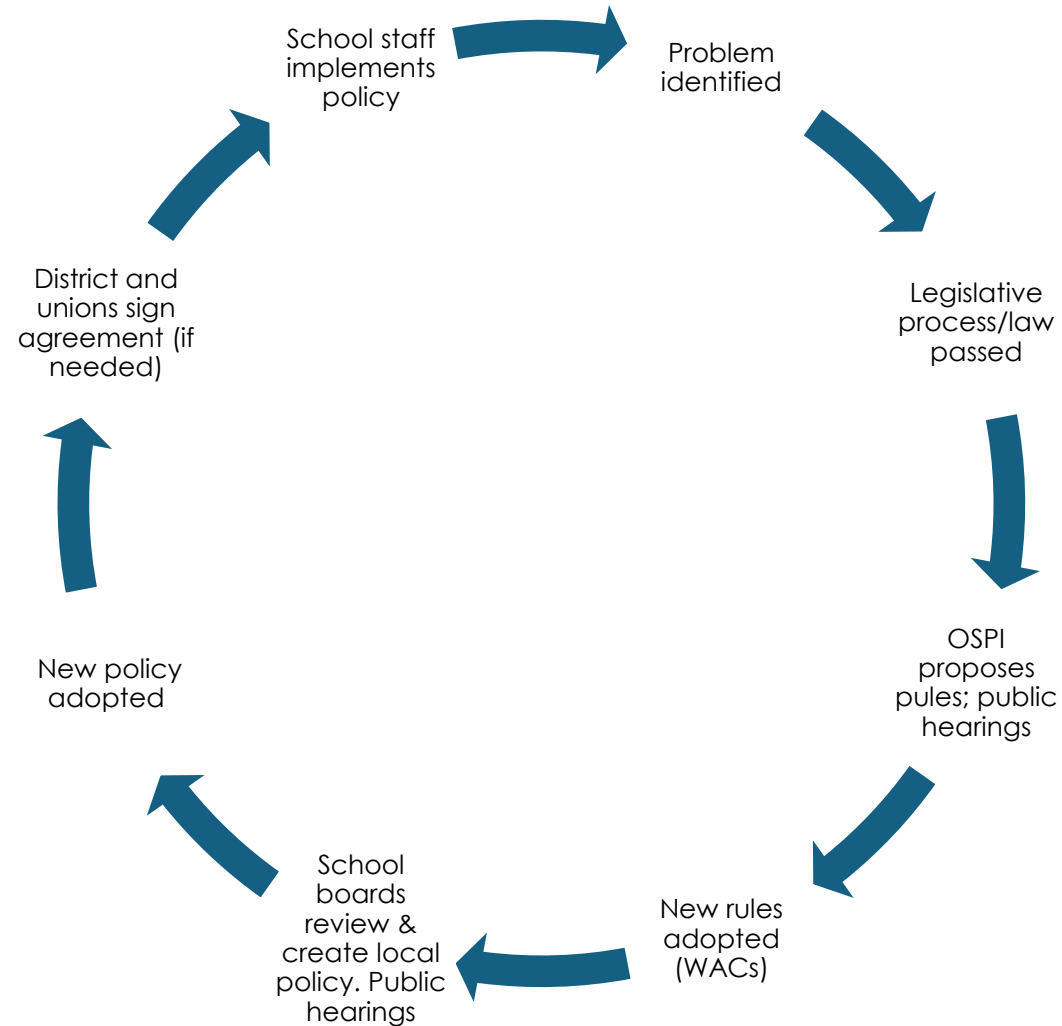
How are they funded:

- Tax dollars (state legislature)

What do they do?

- Rulemaking (WACs)
- Learning standards
- Data gathering/sharing
- Allocate state and federal funds
- Advise & provide technical assistance
- Investigate problems

Education policy cycle



School board vs. school district

School board

Oversees school district

Approves budget

Makes policies

Hires/fires superintendent

Approves collective bargaining agreements (may negotiate)

Elected

Unpaid/volunteer

School district

Handles internal issues

Creates budget requests

Implements/follows policies

Hires/fires principals

Principals hire/fire school staff

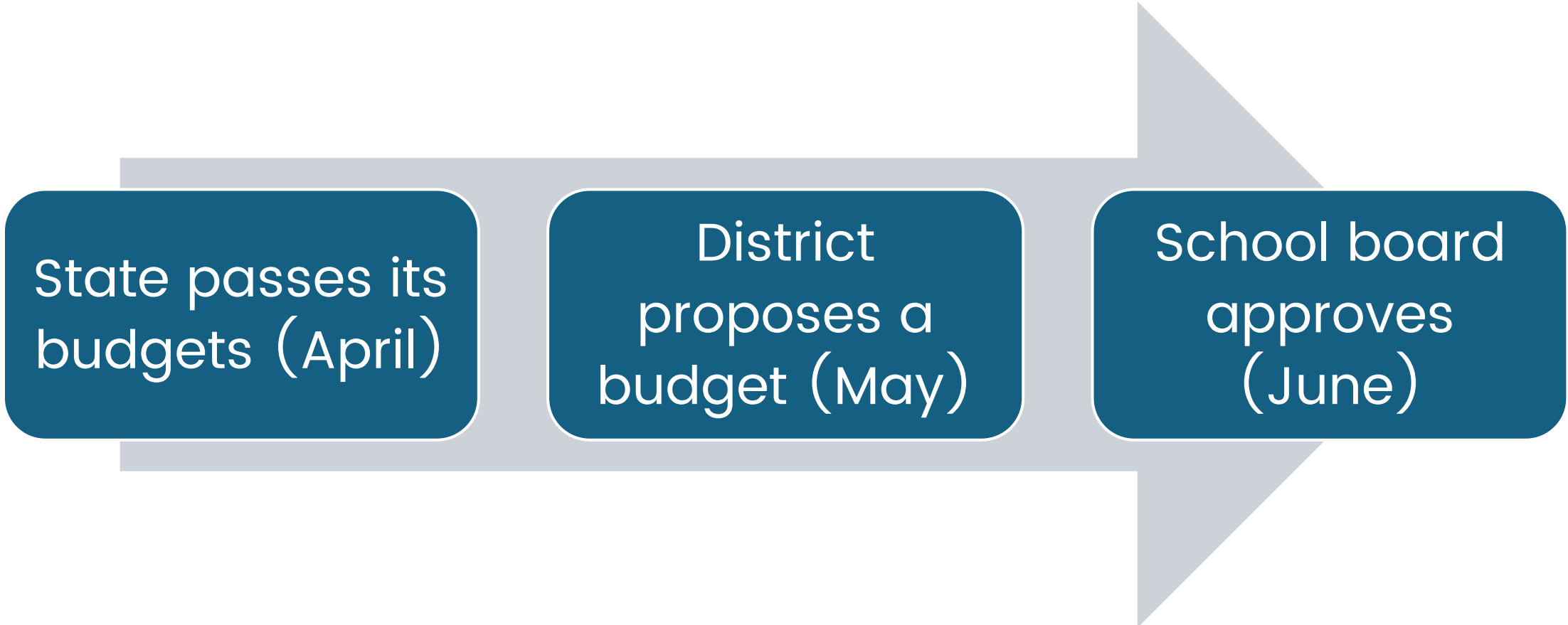
Negotiates with unions

Implements programs

Unelected

Paid

School budget timeline



State passes its budgets (April)

District proposes a budget (May)

School board approves (June)

What impacts a school budget?

Overall enrollment

State funding formulas

Staff not funded by state formulas;
salaries that exceed state's allocation

Special education revenue & costs
(cap on funding)

Federal funding
(IDEA, Title 1/ESSA, etc)

State or private grants

Building maintenance/improvement
costs

Collective Bargaining Agreements
(salaries & benefits; professional
development days)

Litigation & insurance costs

Costs of materials

Passage/failure of local levy

Tips for school board advocacy

Build a relationship with at least one board member

Build relationships with district administrators

Use public comment to introduce yourself and the issues you care about

Tell stories about how a policy is impacting people

Do your homework

- Know the policies and the stakeholders
- Use data to show a problem is systemic, not isolated

Work with other advocates/parents in your community

Advocacy barriers and remedies

- School boards limit public comment to be "on-topic"
 - Contact the board about issues they are not discussing
- Boards limit public comment to only a few minutes
 - Email or physically hand board members more detailed written testimony
- Board members say a policy can't be wrong because a legal team approved it
 - Highlight the negative impact on people in the district
 - Show examples of the same or similar policy causing liability
 - Be ready to cite the law (Americans with Disabilities Act Title II, etc)

Remember the “public” in policy

Public policy is not about laws and rules to control the public

Public policy is MORE than laws and rules that affect the public

In the US, **there is an expectation that the PUBLIC informs public policy.**

- This is why hearings must be held, and
- This is why meetings and hearings must be open to the public

Good public policy is informed by the people it affects

- It evolves to meet changing needs of the public, or
- To just better serve people

Policy makers should EXPECT the public to contribute, and you have rights about being able to contribute

