

## **46<sup>th</sup> District Democrats Legislative & Statewide Questionnaire**

### **Candidate Information**

**Candidate Name:** David Spring

**Office sought:** Superintendent of Public Instruction

Mailing address: 49006 SE 115th Street North Bend WA 98045

Phone: 425-876-9149

Email: david@springforbetterschools.org

Campaign Manager Name: Myself

Consultant(s): None

Website: springforbetterschools.org

Facebook: None other than my personal Facebook page.

**Have you read the 46<sup>th</sup> LD Democrats Draft 2016 Platform?** Yes X\_\_\_, No \_\_\_  
(Go to [http://www.46dems.org/2016\\_ld\\_caucus](http://www.46dems.org/2016_ld_caucus) and click "Draft Platform")

### **Why are you running for this office?**

I am running for Superintendent because it is the only way we are going to restore funding for our public schools. Our public schools are the foundation of our democracy and the key to our economic prosperity. Yet, public schools in Washington state are in a state of crisis due to the legislature's refusal to honor their paramount duty to fully fund our schools. Despite having one of the strongest economies in the nation, students in Washington state are forced to attend the lowest funded most over crowded schools in the nation. Teachers are so stressed and over-worked from dealing with huge class sizes that they are leaving in droves. As a result, over half of our schools now suffer from a teacher shortage. In addition, over half of our schools are so run down that they do not meet either the health code or earthquake standards. Because the legislature has refused to provide more than 10 percent of the actual cost to build real schools, more than 100,000 students in our state are forced to spend their school days in temporary particle board boxes - the highest rate of unhoused students in the nation. Because state legislators have turned their backs on more than one million school children during the past 20 years, it would take an increase of more than \$8 billion per year - nearly doubling our investment in public schools - to address all of these problems. This includes more than \$1 billion per year to fairly pay existing teachers, more than \$4 billion per year to hire additional teachers needed to lower class sizes, more than \$2 billion per year to build more than 200 urgently needed schools each year for the next 5 years and more than \$1 billion per year to eliminate using local levy funds for Basic Education. I am running for superintendent in order to break the gridlock in

Olympia on the school funding crisis and provide these urgently needed funds for our public schools.

After the disgusting 2016 legislative session in which all that happened was the legislature created yet another committee to study school funding, I realized that the state legislature is so corrupt that it is NEVER going to fund our public schools. I concluded that the only viable solution to this road block was to run for Superintendent on a platform of going around the state legislature and directly to the Washington Supreme Court with a motion to declare all tax breaks past since 1996 as unconstitutional, null and void and placing the resulting \$10 billion in additional revenue in an account under the direct control of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. There are several other priorities listed on my website, [springforbetterschools.org](http://springforbetterschools.org), including providing 2 years of free college education or vocational training to every high school graduates and providing a stable home for all 80,000 homeless children in Washington state.

**Please briefly describe your qualifications for this office and your personal and professional background.**

**Education:** I have a Bachelor's Degree in Science Education from Washington State University and a Masters Degree in Child Development from the University of Washington.

**Employment:** I was an Instructor at Bellevue College for about 20 years where I taught courses in Communication, Problem Solving, Team Building, Leadership and Conflict Resolution. I was also an Educational Researcher at the University of Washington for three years. Finally, I owned and managed a small outdoor store in Bellevue Washington for 10 years. I currently teach courses in website development and do consulting work in building websites.

**Community and Civic Activity:**

I am a leader of the Washington Public Bank Coalition. I wrote one of the versions of the Public Bank bill that was supported by over half of the members of the State House.

I have also been a member of the Washington State PTA, the Sierra Club and the Seattle Mountaineers. I am also a leader with several education related groups including the Coalition to Protect our Public Schools, Parents Across America, Restore GED Fairness and Opt Out Washington. These are all groups fighting against the billionaire takeover of our public schools. I have also spent the past 8 years in Olympia drafting school funding bills and attempting to persuade legislators to fully fund our public schools.

**Union Affiliation:** I have been a member of the Washington Education Association. I am currently a member of WEA - Retired.

**Public leader to advocate for new state revenue:**

I have drafted several bills to provide the billions of dollars in additional funding to restore school funding in Washington state to at least the national average. These bills include a **Millionaires Income Tax** that was the precursor to Initiative 1098 and a Millionaires Wealth Tax (**Senate Bill 6093**) which would repeal the 1997 Tax Break on Intangible Property and provide about \$5 billion in additional revenue for public schools.. I have spoken with nearly every member of the state legislature about options to increase school funding. I have worked day and night on the school funding problem for more than 8 years.

**Do you consider yourself a Democrat? Have you ever been a member of another party? Have you been actively involved with the Democratic Party?**

While the Superintendent of Public Instruction is a non-partisan position, I have been a Democrat all of my life. I have never been a member of any other political party. Here is a summary of my involvement with the Democratic Party. I am currently the elected Representative to the King County Democratic Party Legislative Action Committee for the 5th LD Democrats and an elected Representative to the Board of the Washington State Democratic Party Progressive Caucus. I am also a leader with Washington for Bernie Sanders. Our website is **Washington for Bernie Sanders.com**. More than 50,000 people have read an article I wrote on this website explaining how to become a delegate during the Washington State Democratic Party caucuses. I have also been the Training Advisor for the King County Democrats and an elected member of the King County Democrats Central Committee for the 5th Legislative District. In 2008, 2010, 2012 & 2014, I ran for State Representative for the 5th LD Position 2 and knocked on more than 5,000 doors in East King County during each of these races. I therefore am very well known in East King County. While I have not yet won a General Election race, I have never lost a primary race - including in 2010 when I was outspent by more than 40 to 1. In 2013, I also ran for the Snoqualmie Valley School Board and defeated the incumbent school board President in the primary only to narrowly lose to the former school board President in the General election. I also knocked on 5,000 doors in that race meaning **I have knocked on more than 25,000 doors in East King County during the past 8 years** - likely some sort of record. I learned a great deal by listening to all of these parents express their concerns about their kids and their schools.

**What's your plan to win?**

As with my past campaigns, I intend to rely on online social networking. For example, I am the leader of a group called Opt Out Washington. More than 50,000 parents in Washington state have downloaded my Opt Out form to opt their students out of the unfair SBAC test. I expect more than 100,000 parents will visit our website Spring for Better Schools.org. It will not take them long to realize that I am the only candidate for Superintendent with an actual plan to fully fund our public schools and lower class sizes now - no more excuses, no more delays and no more fake committees. If each of them shares this information with other parents, I

will win. The truth is a powerful weapon and in this election, the truth is clearly on my side.

**What do you see as the most important functions of the position you are running for? What qualities do you possess that make you the candidate best suited to this role?**

Amplify and immediately funding our public schools is not only the paramount duty of the State legislature, it is also the paramount duty of the Superintendent of Public Instruction. My most important function will be to immediately and fully fund our public schools. The reason I am the candidate best suited for this role is because I have spent 20 years at Bellevue College teaching courses in Problem Solving. I have also spent the past 8 years in Olympia seeking a solution to this problem. This experience has convinced me that the only way our schools will be funding is to go around the legislature and directly to the Supreme Court asking for an order to declare the last 20 years of tax breaks to be unconstitutional.

**If elected what would your top three priorities be?**

My top three priorities will be first to fully and immediately fund our public schools by filing a motion for summary judgment with our Supreme Court to declare the past 20 years of tax breaks to be unconstitutional. Second, I will immediately send these \$10 billion per year in additional revenue to local school boards so they can immediately begin building hundreds of schools and hiring thousands of teachers so we can cut class sizes in half so that struggling students can get the help they need to succeed in school and succeed in life. Third, I will immediately end Common Core and the SBAC test in order to allow school districts to move towards more age appropriate learning standards and more accurate assessment systems. This includes ending the Pearson Common Core GED test and replacing it with the HISET high school equivalency test.

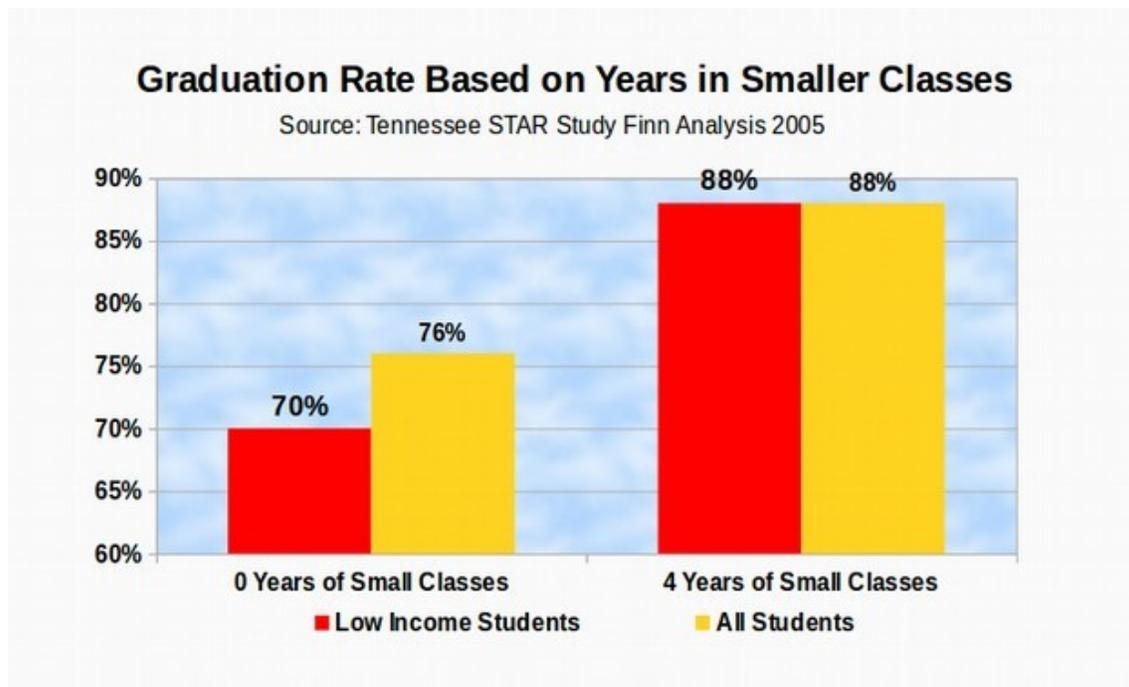
**How will you support women and families' economic opportunities? Would you support legislation closing the wage gap, funding childcare options, and requiring paid family leave?**

My plan will immediately inject more than \$10 billion per year back into local economies creating more than 100,000 public sector jobs and 200,000 private sector jobs - creating the biggest economic boom in the history of Washington state. I absolutely support closing the wage gap, funding childcare options and paid family leave.

**How will you work to address racial equity?**

The best way to achieve racial equity for our children and to close the so-called Opportunity Gap or Achievement Gap is to fully fund our schools so that we can cut class sizes in half so that struggling students can get the help they need to succeed in school and succeed in life. We lowering class sizes does achieve racial equity thanks to an experiment conducted in Tennessee in the 1980s called the STAR experiment.

bout 12,000 students in 80 schools were randomly assigned to a small class size of 15 to 18 students or a regular class size of 22 to 25 students in grades K through 3. In the 4th grade, all students were returned to regular size classes. Students in smaller classes had fewer attendance problems, fewer discipline problems, and much higher test scores. The effect was most noticeable among lower income and minority students. For example, the drop out rate 12 years later among low income students was cut from 30% to only 12%. Small class sizes were able to greatly reduce and in many cases completely eliminate the so-called "Achievement Gap" between higher income and lower income students. In addition, lower class sizes reduces the teacher attrition rate.



Notice that when low income and minority students are given small class sizes, they graduate at the same rate as high income students. This is why I am such a strong advocate of small class sizes. No other "magic bullet" solution has been able to eliminate the achievement gap like small class sizes. This is also why it is so terrible that Washington state now has the highest class sizes in the nation. High class sizes are extremely harmful to low income and minority students.

**Describe your stance on Washington’s tax structure. What needs to be changed? What should stay the same?**

Washington state has the most regressive and unfair tax structure in the nation. We must find a politically viable way to get the wealthy in our state to pay their fair share of state taxes. While I have been a proponent of Initiative 1098 in the past, billionaires in our state have made achieving an income tax politically impossible. Currently, our legislature gives away more than \$30 billion per year in tax breaks for wealthy corporations. Most of these tax breaks go directly to the super rich. For example, over one billion per year in tax breaks goes directly to Bill Gates - the

richest man in the world. The best way to get Bill to pay his fair share of state taxes is to immediately repeal illegal corporate tax breaks. There is no need to pass new laws. Instead, we merely need to ask our Supreme Court to repeal unconstitutional laws.

**Are there issues that you’ve worked on or are excited to work on that are not receiving much media attention?**

Yes. In the next week, I will be issuing a report on the horrible condition of our public schools. I am merely waiting on confirming documents being reviewed by the Washington State Department of Health. My report will expose the fact that over half of the schools in Washington state do not meet the Health Codes or the Earthquake codes and that one third of our schools do not have a safe source of drinking water. Think Flint Michigan on a massive scale. Moreover, the legislature knows about this problem and instead of working to repair and replace these schools, the legislature placed a clause in the Appropriations budget to prevent the Department of Health from inspecting and documenting the health problems of our schools. The public needs to know about the problems facing our schools. Very soon they are going to find out - thanks to a whistleblower at the State Department of Health who supports my campaign to immediately replace hundreds of schools.

**How will you combat climate change?**

Great question. My plan is to place solar panels on the roofs of every school in Washington state so that students can see that there is a solution to the climate change problem and their community school is part of that solution.

| Question   | Support | Oppose | Qualify, if needed |
|--|---------|--------|--------------------|
| Do you support or oppose Raise up Washington’s initiative to increase the minimum wage?                    | support |        |                    |
| Do you support or oppose access to safe and legal abortion?  | support |        |                    |
| Do you support or oppose amending Washington’s Constitution to require a two-thirds vote to raise revenue? |         | oppose |                    |
| Do you support or oppose allowing coal or oil to be exported from Washington State’s ports?                |         | oppose |                    |

|  |         |        |  |
|--|---------|--------|--|
| Do you support or oppose making two years of community college or technical school tuition-free?       | support |        |  |
| Do you support or oppose requiring paid vacation and sick/safe leave?                                  | support |        |  |
| Do you support automatic voter registration?   | support |        |  |
| Do you support or oppose the death penalty?  |         | oppose |  |
| Do you support or oppose barring employers from asking criminal history questions in job applications? | support |        |  |
| Do you support or oppose legislation to fix Washington's "three strikes" law?                          | support |        |  |

The following questions are position specific. You only need to complete the questions for the position that you're running for.

### **Superintendent of Public Instruction**

#### **How will you work to address the achievement gap in our public schools?**

As I have explained above, there is only one scientifically proven way to address the achievement gap - that is cutting class sizes in half from the current 32 students per class (highest in the nation) to 16 students per class (lowest in the nation).

#### **Please describe your position on standardized testing.**

I am the leader of Opt Out Washington. I am completely opposed to standardized testing as being a form of child abuse. As superintendent, I will use my authority under Article III, Section 22 of the Washington State constitution to immediately end the SBAC test in all grades and end its use as a graduation requirement - allowing school districts to use fairer and more accurate means to assess and assist students.

By contrast, two of my opponents (Reykdal and Seaquist) voted for House Bill 1450 in 2013. This was the bill that brought the SBAC test to Washington State. In addition, Reykdal was the prime sponsor of House Bill 2214 - a bill to accelerate the adoption of the SBAC test as a graduation requirement from the year 2019 to 2016. If adopted, this bill would force the most draconian graduation requirements in the nation on our students and eliminate the option of parents to opt their kids out of high stakes testing because the SBAC test would be required to graduate. Only 15 states including Washington require passing a bubble test in order to graduate. If I am elected superintendent, I will immediately suspend passing a high stakes test as a graduation requirement. My position is therefore the exact opposite of Reykdal and Seaquist on this high stakes testing issue.

**Given the *McCleary* decision, what legislation do you support or propose to fully fund education and maintain funding for other basic services? Do you support increasing revenue? Given existing public needs and the state of the economy, should such legislation include increasing revenue?**

In order to cut class sizes in half, we need to double state revenue for public schools from the current \$9 billion per year to \$18 billion per year. There is only one way to immediately get this amount of urgently needed revenue. That way is to ask the Supreme Court to declare the past 20 years of corporate tax breaks to be unconstitutional. This does not require passing any new legislation - merely declaring current tax break laws to be illegal. The Supreme Court has this power. As Superintendent, I will ask them to use it.

**Do you support or oppose charter schools? Why or why not?**

I have written numerous articles about how unregulated and profit driven charter schools inevitably turn into fraud factories and are contrary to several sections of our Washington state constitution (including the clause that requires a uniform system of fully funded public schools). I am the only candidate for superintendent that publicly testified against charter schools and Senate Bill 6195 in either the Senate or House hearings. While all of the other candidates claim to oppose charter schools, one (Jones) spoke in favor of charter schools at a public hearing in Tacoma, another (Seaquist) was the prime sponsor of House Bill 2428 in 2012. This bill would have allowed up to 50 charter schools in Washington state - exempting them from nearly all state laws regulating public schools and diverting millions of dollars in state funding away from public schools to pay for charter schools.. Another candidate (Reykdal) voted against Senate Bill 6194 but then voted for the 2016 supplemental budget that included millions of dollars to fund these illegal charter schools. Thus, these three candidates may claim to be against charter schools. But like many politicians in Olympia, their actions are the opposite of their words