



## Voter-mandated class size reductions Initiative 1351 – What it does

- I-1351 is part and parcel of McCleary, the State Supreme Court’s landmark decision that reaffirmed that the state must amply fund our schools.
  - McCleary addresses the full spectrum of needs that increase the opportunities for student success, including items like providing:
    - Smaller classes to provide more one-on-one attention for students
    - Adequate staffing and professional salaries to attract and retain quality teachers
    - Student and family support services to ensure students are ready to learn
    - Materials and supplies necessary for a quality public education.
- I-1351 reduces average class sizes to 17 for K-3, and 25 for most classes in grades 4-12 and to 15 and 23 respectively in high-poverty schools.
- The initiative is phased in over four years, with high-poverty schools first in line for relief.
  - The legislature determines the specific implementation plan, but it must achieve 50% funding by 2016-17, and full funding by the 2018-19 school year.
- I-1351 provides funding for critical student and school supports, including librarians, nurses, counselors, para-educators, office professionals, family engagement coordinators, school psychologists and other staff necessary to effectively run a school.
- I-1351 requires more money to improve learning opportunities for students in special education.
  - The initiative provides flexibility for districts and schools to meet local needs, that address any special education purpose, including:
    - Improving compensation and providing additional educators who help kids in special education succeed, such as Speech and Language Pathologists, Occupational Therapists, Physical Therapists, School Psychologists or para professionals.
- I-1351 requires districts that have classroom space to reduce average class sizes to the levels identified. If classrooms aren’t available, schools have flexibility, as long as the funding provided for class size reduction is used for direct services to students. Some ideas include:
  - Hiring certificated staff to work as tutors
  - Offering summer school programs
  - Hiring additional reading and math assistants, or other positions that work directly with students to meet their needs.

These, or other alternatives don't erase the classroom space issue – but they do provide time to determine how to address the facility issues and still meet the needs of our kids. The approaches each district takes can and should be bargained locally.

- I-1351 requires the state to provide the funding to school districts, and does not impose an unfunded mandate for the district. I-1351 will bring new money to districts which can be bargained locally to ensure that local needs are addressed.
- I-1351 may free up local levy funding if districts have already implemented lower class sizes or increased staffing levels. This could help free up money for other local needs, including those identified at the bargaining table.
- If, as some assume, the Legislature continues to fail to meet its constitutional obligation, the initiative doesn't commit the district to pick up the slack. I-1351 is an allocation model and provides districts with additional resources to support students – plain and simple.