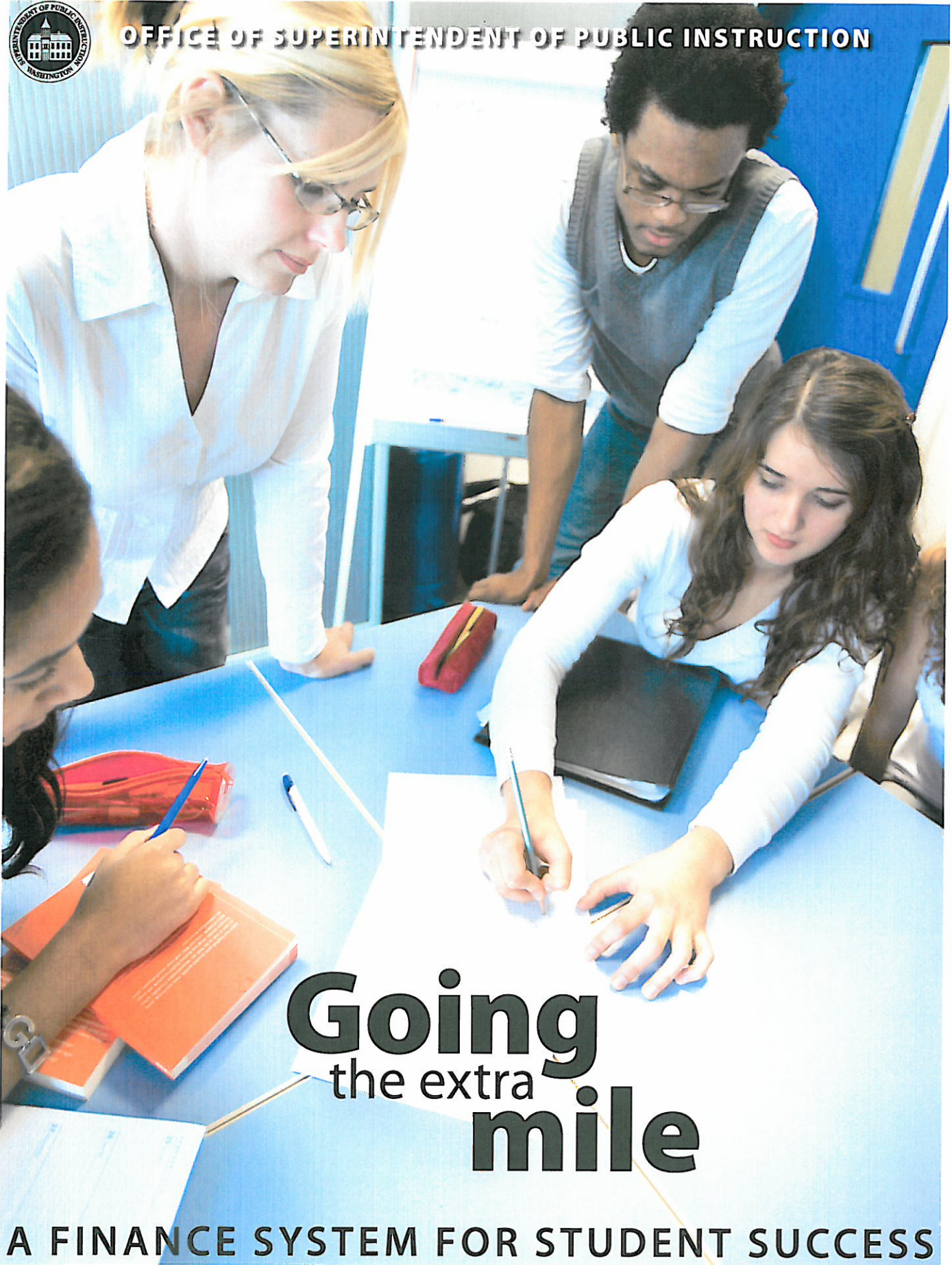




OFFICE OF SUPERINTENDENT OF PUBLIC INSTRUCTION



# Going the extra mile

A FINANCE SYSTEM FOR STUDENT SUCCESS

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Presentation to Basic Education Funding Task Force**  
**By State Superintendent Terry Bergeson**  
**June 9, 2008**

---

In 1993, Washington citizens and their leaders boldly embraced a new goal for our K-12 education system: Increase the relevance and rigor of our public schools to ensure that every student who earns a high school diploma is prepared for his or her next step in a competitive and challenging 21<sup>st</sup> century world.

In the ensuing 15 years, we have made remarkable progress, and just this month, we are graduating what I believe is the best-prepared class of students ever, thanks to the commitment of thousands of educators, parents, and community and state leaders who have held true to our vision and worked heroically to support our students.

As we celebrate unprecedented student achievement success, however, we also face unprecedented financial problems. We have created ambitious learning goals for our children, and now, more than ever, we need a school funding system that fully supports those goals. It is time for our money to follow our values.

The following proposal outlines a completely restructured K-12 education funding system that provides the kind of support and incentives needed to fully realize the goals we set for ourselves and our children back in 1993. The proposal includes three core elements:

**1. Enhancing support for educators**

The research is clear: The single biggest factor driving student achievement is the quality of the teacher in the classroom. If we want all of our students to reach their full potential, we need highly skilled educators to teach them. We currently fall short in two key areas that need immediate attention: We must provide stronger professional support for our beginning teachers as they start their careers and hone their classroom skills, and we must restructure our compensation system to better reflect teacher knowledge, skills and leadership. Also, to personalize education and make a teaching career manageable, we must reduce class sizes and offer more educational support from librarians, nurses and counselors.

**2. Enhancing student support systems**

Our students have diverse needs. Some are new to our country and still learning English. Some face life challenges that affect their performance in school. Others are academically gifted and need additional academic challenges. All of our students come to our schools at different starting points, and with different hopes and dreams for their futures. Secondary students need academic and career guidance as they navigate complex choices and requirements. We need broad systems in place to support and guide each of these students.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**  
**Presentation to Basic Education Funding Task Force**  
**By State Superintendent Terry Bergeson**  
**June 9, 2008**

---

**3. Fully funding school operating costs**

Running our schools is expensive. We bus children to school, and feed them while they are there. We make sure our schools have heat, lights and clean, safe water. And we work hard to keep textbooks updated, and to provide students access to ever-changing technology they must master to live successfully in the modern world. Over the past 20 years, our local schools districts have taken on a greater and greater share of the funding burden for these basic operational costs. The state needs to fully fund school non-employee operational costs so that local school levies can return to supporting what they were originally intended to support – enhancements to basic education programs.

This funding proposal outlines each of these goal areas in more detail, and a process for phasing in additional state financial support over the next eight years. The problems in our school funding structure have been years in the making, and there are no quick fixes. We can, though, begin to address these funding challenges in the same focused way we have addressed the need to raise student achievement levels over the past decade. We owe it to our students, our educators and our citizens to succeed in creating a new, sustainable funding structure for our schools.