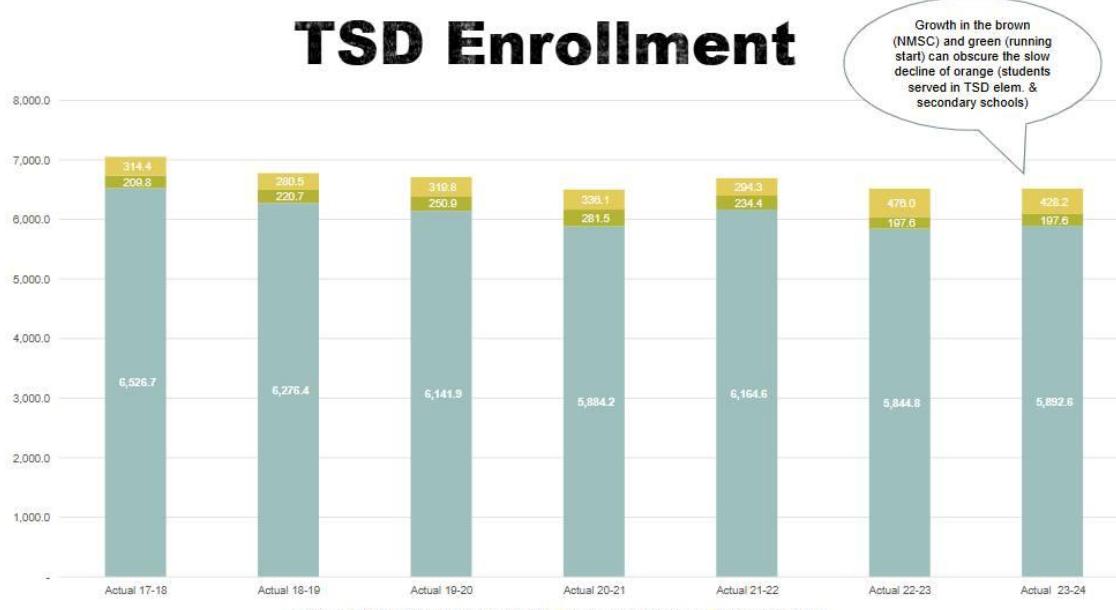


# Tumwater Education Association

## ADVOCATE

[TumwaterEA.org](http://TumwaterEA.org)

March 2025



"There were concerns with the pandemic enrollment loss, that although the District began to make some minor reductions in staffing (through attrition and retirements) they were not significant enough to align district expenditures with available resources."

SOURCE: WT LEONARD CONSULTING

## Tumwater School District

### What is the budget deficit origin?

#### WAYNE LEONARD REPORT

We have to rewind back in time. The former Assistant Superintendent reported to the Tumwater Education Association bargaining team two years ago that the District Finance Director and Human Resources Director were not communicating during and after the pandemic.

The former Assistant Superintendent told the Association that District spending went unchecked by the former Superintendent during that time. The former Finance Director and Human Resources Director were eventually released from District employment. The former Superintendent resigned after District administrators presented the Board of Directors and Superintendent with a letter of no confidence in the Superintendent. The Tumwater Education Association had no part in the letter of no confidence. The District administrators asked the Association to sign the letter, and the Association declined outright.

The Board hired consultant Wayne Leonard to complete a detailed analysis of the District budget during the 2021-22 school year. Leonard stated the following in his final report dated January 18, 2022:

"The staff recognize issues exist and in response to the issues and concerns that exist, District leaders have started taking steps to address the issues identified in this report. The District Leadership Team has started meeting to discuss budget issues more frequently and has had regular discussions about steps to adjust expenses to align with revenues. The Finance Director has been working to determine how to ensure they have the information needed to improve accuracy of projections. The Finance Director and Human Resources Director have been discussing how to work together to improve communication to ensure revenue and expenditure projections better support informed decisions about staffing levels for the next school year."

#### President's Corner

We hear a lot about diversity, equity, and inclusion lately. In fact, these three words have become controversial in the current political climate. Let's set aside those politics for a moment and just simply revisit the words as they stand alone.

**Diversity:** the condition of having or being composed of different elements

**Equity:** fairness or justice in the way people are treated

**Inclusion:** the act of including: the state of being included: to take in or comprise as a part of a whole or group

We are educators after all, so I thought maybe we should approach the words as if we were teaching new vocabulary to our students. They still need to learn these words, regardless of the current political climate, because the words still have use in regular everyday discourse.

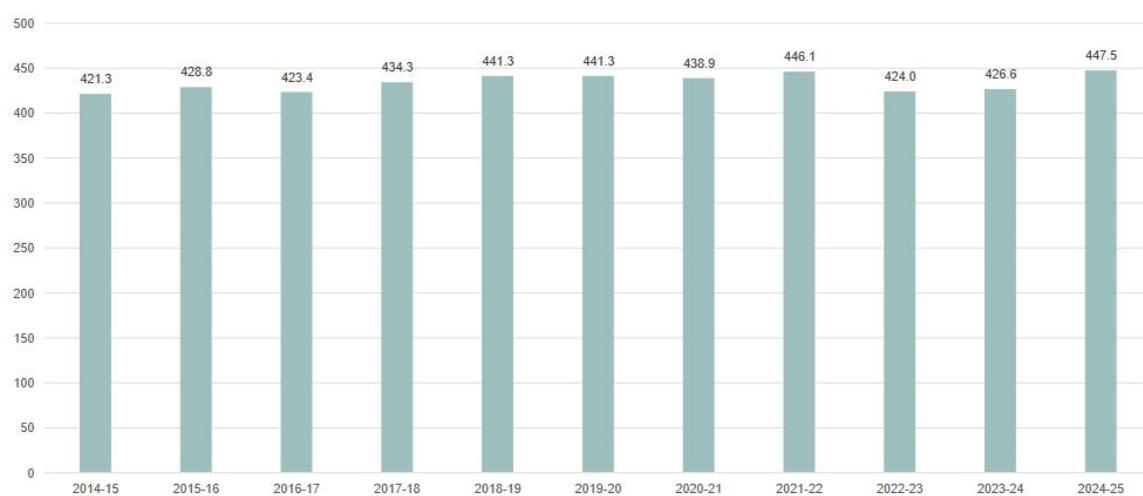
We must also move beyond the basic dictionary definitions of these words because Tumwater Education Association members are accountable to these words in Tumwater School District policies, OSPI guidance, WIAA rules, and Washington State laws.

Tumwater Education Association will continue adhering to these three foundational aspects of public education not just because we are required, but also because we uphold the diversity, equity, and inclusion of all students in Tumwater and beyond.



## Certificated Staff since 2014

### S-275 Report



**"Of the staff interviewed, all indicated that the budget is not discussed at District Leadership Team meetings. Without discussion at the Leadership Team level it is easy for District level administrators to get different information regarding budget priorities."**

SOURCE: WT LEONARD CONSULTING

## Tumwater School District

### What is the budget deficit origin?

#### CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

The Board authorized the funding for Wayne Leonard's consulting services during the 2021-22 school year. The Wayne Leonard consultant report confirmed what the former Assistant Superintendent reported to the Association bargaining team two years ago. Leonard also stated the following in his report:

"The way departmental duties are split in Tumwater, it is possible for the Finance and Human Resource Departments to be preparing their parts of the budget independently of one another. Without at least brief, ongoing discussion and coordination of developing budget issues at the District Leadership Team level it is easy to see how miscommunications between departments could occur."

Now we have to fast forward to the current District budget deficit. Board President Melissa Beard made the following statement at the January 23, 2025 Board meeting:

"We have to right size our budget because we were doing what our kids needed, and the state didn't come through for us. Yes, this is tough. I think the decisions that were made last year to go over budget \$4.5 million was not done frivolously. It was done out of the need to deal with behaviors that were going on to support our staff that are trying to teach our kids. I just want to be on record saying that I wish we didn't overspend \$4.5 million, but I don't think we did so in a way that wasn't supporting kids."

If we hadn't gone over \$4.5 million, we would be having different discussions now, probably. There would be different behavior discussions.

There would be a lot of other things going on and, unfortunately, those are going to be coming. That's what's going to be coming next after these cuts because all these people that we have hired support kids. We also cannot, the brave thing that we've got to do is make these cuts because we cannot dissolve as a District because that's the next step. That's the brave thing that we're doing."

Which leads to several critical questions:

Why did the Tumwater School District Board of Directors disregard the Wayne Leonard consultant report after authorizing the funding for the report in the first place?

Why did the Tumwater School District Board of Directors continue authorizing the District to hire additional staff during the 2023-25 school years regardless of the Wayne Leonard report findings?

Why did the Tumwater School District Board of Directors assume additional Washington State revenue would increase despite student enrollment data showing a decline and subsequent flatline in enrollment over the past few years?

These are important questions to consider moving forward.

[Wayne Leonard Report](#)

## Provisional Employees

There are two RCWs which address provisional employees in Washington State public schools.

RCW 28A.405.210 addresses nonrenewal of employee contracts due to enrollment decline or revenue loss. The RCW title is "Conditions and contracts of employment – Determination of probable cause for nonrenewal of contracts – Nonrenewal due to enrollment decline or revenue loss – Notice – Opportunity for hearing." The specific language addressing provisional employees exists in Part 4:

"This section shall not be applicable to 'provisional employees' as so designated in RCW [28A.405.220](#); transfer to a subordinate certificated position as that procedure is set forth in RCW [28A.405.230](#) or [28A.405.24](#) 5 shall not be construed as a nonrenewal of contract for the purposes of this section."

RCW 28A.405.210 essentially defines provisional certificated staff as being at will employees of the District when contract nonrenewal is a result of enrollment decline or revenue loss.

RCW 28A.405.220 addresses the procedures for the District to follow when nonrenewing the contracts of provisional employees. The RCW title is "Conditions and contracts of employment – Nonrenewal of provisional employees – Notice – Procedure." The specific language defining provisional employees exists in Part 1:

"Notwithstanding the provisions of RCW [28A.405.210](#), every person employed by a school district in a teaching or other nonsupervisory certificated position shall be subject to nonrenewal of employment contract as provided in this section during the first three years of employment by such district, unless: (a) The employee has previously completed at least two years of certificated employment in another school district in the state of Washington, in which case the employee shall be subject to nonrenewal of employment contract pursuant to this section during the first year of employment with the new district."



Article 29 of the Tumwater Education Association collective bargaining agreement outlines the steps for involuntary transfers or reassignments. Article 29 addresses all aspects of position recruitment, application, and job sharing as well. [TumwaterEA Contract](#)

## Involutionary Transfer or Reassignment

### Article 29 Position Recruitment, Application, and Job Sharing

The District has notified the Association that Human Resources will complete notifications of contract nonrenewal to certificated staff employees by the end of March 2025. The District has informed the Association that employees with one-year contracts and employees in a provisional status will be nonrenewed for the 2025-26 school year. The District is providing time for other employees to declare retirement or resignation prior to notifying the one-year contract and provisional status employees of nonrenewal. That way, the District will have a more specific assessment of exactly how many employees will be nonrenewed next year. The Association does not have that number yet.

The District will then begin notifying remaining certificated staff employees of possible involuntary transfers or reassignments for the 2025-26 school year after we return from Spring Break in April 2025. Our contract provides specific language regarding the process and standards the District must follow when involuntarily transferring or reassigning a certificated staff employee. Involuntary transfers or reassignments occur when the employee is assigned to a different grade level, subject content area, or building location and objects to the transfer or reassignment. Voluntary transfers or reassignments occur when employees actively seek to be transferred or reassigned, of their own accord, without any directives from the District to complete the transfer or reassignment.



The District must adhere to the Article 29 contract language when conducting employee involuntary transfers or reassignments.

#### Article 29 Section A: Involutionary Transfer or Reassignment

Provide notice to the employee by June 30.

Provide a list of open positions to the employee.

Meet with the employee and provide notice of the reason. The employee may have an Association representative present.

Not place employees outside their major and/or minor preparation areas except in unusual situations.

Place voluntary applicants into the open positions before involuntary employees.

Place employees into involuntary transfers or reassignments based on the least continuous time spent working in the District.

Use Washington State seniority as a tie breaker when two employees have the same level of District seniority.

Use elementary grade banding in groups of K-1, 2-3, and 4-5 when determining availability for involuntary transfer or reassignment.

Not involuntarily transfer or reassign an employee more than once every two years.

Place an employee back into a position of their endorsement(s) if such a position becomes available prior to the involuntary transfer or reassignment.

Return the employee back to their original position if the position becomes a vacancy again within four years.

Place the employee into another position of their endorsement(s) within one year.

**TUMWATER**  
EDUCATION ASSOCIATION



Tumwater School District staff are the heartbeat of education in Tumwater schools. Employees from all bargaining units provide 'Continuous Student Learning in a Caring, Engaging Environment' everyday for students. Proposed staffing reductions by the District will impact student learning in Tumwater.

## TAP, TOPA, and TEA Joint Statement

### Tumwater School District Staff Reduction

"We know staffing is the greatest expense for the Tumwater School District. The cost is an investment in the growth of our Tumwater students and community. School districts cannot operate without staff who provide the educational programs and support for students.

Program and staffing decisions made by the Board and the District are value statements which impact students and the community directly in very real and tangible ways. The District website states, 'Each day our staff of just over 800 employees carries out our mission to provide 'Continuous Student Learning in a Caring, Engaging Environment.' Our academic focus is to help each child succeed by setting achievement goals and then using data to closely monitor progress and adjust instruction. To do this, we encourage and support staff collaboration and professional development. We strive to create a safe, supportive environment in which all students feel connected and valued while they grow academically.'

The District cannot accomplish the Mission and Focus, as stated, by reducing staffing. It takes dedicated staff to provide "Continuous Student Learning in a Caring, Engaging Environment." The reduction of programs and staffing in the District will negatively impact the ability to monitor student progress and adjust instruction. The reduction of programs and staffing in the District will negatively impact collaboration and professional development. The reduction of programs and staffing in the District will negatively impact student safety and support.

The reduction of programs and staffing in the District will negatively impact students feeling connected and valued. The reduction of programs and staffing in the District will negatively impact the ability of students to grow academically. These impacts will be felt in devastating ways at every school within the District.

That is why we, the Tumwater Association of Paraprofessionals, Tumwater Office Professionals Association, and Tumwater Education Association Presidents, urge the Board to decline Reduction in Educational Program Resolution #2 and search for other ways to balance the budget.

Staffing is the greatest expense for the Tumwater School District. Staffing is also the greatest investment in our Tumwater students and community. We stand together in solidarity before you today as we rise jointly in opposition to the reduction of programs and staffing in the Tumwater School District."

President Jennifer Monson  
Tumwater Association of Paraprofessionals

President Kristina Dilworth  
Tumwater Office Professionals Association

President DJ Brimer  
Tumwater Education Association