



Education Still Tops Public Agenda for Legislature

Washington voters don't think the Legislature has finished its work on the public education system. For the fourth straight year, *Elway Poll* respondents named education-related issues as the "most important issues the legislature should focus on."

There does seem to be recognition of progress. Education is not the dominant issue that it has been in recent years. One in three (32%) respondents volunteered an education issue—down from nearly half last year (45%). Half of that 32% specified education funding as their top concern.

Taxes joined education near the top of the priority list this year. "Taxes" is always on the list, but the 27% this year is the highest mention of taxes since 1997. It is unclear whether the rise is due to the tax package just passed by congress, or the "levy swap" tax plan put in place by the legislature last year, or some combination of both. Whatever the reason, taxes are higher than normal on the public radar as the 2018 session opens.

The economy, always near the top of voter concerns, ranked third, slightly up from last year but well below the Great Recession years of 2009-2014, when nearly half of voters were listing as #1.

Social services jumped into fourth position based almost entirely on the homelessness crisis. Among the 21% who mentioned a social services issue, 18% named homelessness. Concern for homelessness was spread across the state, from 24% in King County, to 18% in Eastern Washington to 12% in the North Puget Sound region.

Infrastructure was another issue that seemed to come out of nowhere to register this year at 9%—up from 3% last year and less than 1% in previous years. This rise presumably can be attributed to President Trump's attention on the issue. If "roads & bridges" were counted in infrastructure instead of transportation, the infrastructure category would be 16% and transportation would drop to 12%.

LOW EXPECTATIONS

Most voters did not expect the legislature to make "significant progress" on the issues they had named as most important. Overall, 37% thought there would be progress on the issue they considered to be most important. Among the top-ranked issues:

- 41% of those who named education as the top issue were confident of progress; as were
- 33% of those who named taxes;
- 42% of those who named the economy;
- 39% of those who named social services;
- 45% of those who named transportation;
- 44% of those who named health care.

"MOST IMPORTANT" ISSUE FOR THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION: 2008—2018

This table displays the % who named issues in major categories. A complete list of the issues appears in the table on p.2.

	'18	'17	'16	'15	'14	'13	'12	'11	'10	'09	'08
Education	32%	45%	33%	42%	19%	22%	27%	14%	11%	15%	20%
Taxes	27%	16%	14%	19%	14%	12%	12%	12%	10%	6%	15%
Economy	26%	22%	32%	32%	46%	43%	59%	44%	49%	43%	18%
Social Services*	21%	7%	12%	3%	4%	5%	4%	3%	6%	9%	5%
Transportation	19%	15%	11%	17%	8%	2%	5%	5%	2%	10%	33%
Health Care	18%	9%	6%	7%	11%	4%	12%	13%	14%	10%	16%
Budget/Spending	12%	10%	12%	15%	17%	24%	41%	30%	25%	23%	7%
Infrastructure	9%	3%									
Public Safety	7%	5%	5%	4%	1%	*	1%	1%	5%	1%	3%
Environment	7%	3%	5%	6%	2%	2%	*	1%	1%	1%	6%
Energy	1%		0%	1%	1%	1%*	*		1%	2%	4%

* 18% of "Social Services" was "homelessness"

Legislative Priorities by Party and Region

As expected, Democrats and Republicans had somewhat different priorities. Democrats ranked education #1, where Republicans named taxes. Perhaps less expected, three issues were ranked in the top five by both Democrats and Republicans, as well as by Independents: education, the economy and taxes.

Democrats ranked health care and homelessness in their top five; Republicans named transportation and state spending. The top five issues by party were:

Democrats:	Education (39%); Health care (24%); Economy (24%); Taxes (23%); Homeless (20%).
Republicans:	Taxes (31%); Education (27%); Economy (25%); Transportation (19%); State spending (16%).
Independents:	Education (29%); Economy (29%); Taxes (29%); Transportation (21%); Homeless (20%).

There were variations by region as well. The top five issues by region were:

Seattle:	Education (33%); Transportation (30%); Economy (28%); Taxes (28%); Homeless (23%).
King County:	Education (39%); Economy (29%); Transportation (24%); Homeless (25%); Taxes (22%).
Pierce/Kitsap:	Education (36%); Taxes (33%); Economy (28%); Social Services (20%); Transportation (20%).
North Sound:	Taxes (28%); Education (26%); Economy (25%); Transportation (19%); State spending (19%).
West:	Education (31%); Taxes (28%); Health care (26%); Economy (22%); Homeless (14%).
East:	Education (26%); Economy (27%); Taxes (26%); Health care (23%); Homeless (18%).

“Most Important Issues” Legislature Should Focus on this Session

The question was open-ended, to allow respondents to answer in their own words.

More than 40 issues were named by at least 1% of respondents.

Interviewers recorded the answers, which were then coded and put into categories.

The categories in BOLD are comprised of the issues listed beneath them.

The numbers are %'s of respondents who gave each answer.

The percentages do not total to 100% because multiple answers were allowed.

EDUCATION	32%
“Education”	16
Funding/McCleary	15
Education Quality	1
TAXES	27%
“Taxes”	20
Tax Reform	2
Carbon Tax	1
Property Tax	1
Other Taxes	4
ECONOMY	27%
Jobs	11
Housing Cost	8
“Economy”	6
Wage Issues	2
Helping Business	1
Income Equality	1
Cost of Living	1
SOCIAL SERVICES	21%
Homelessness	18
Mental Health	1
Welfare	1
TRANSPORTATION	19%
Roads	7
“Transportation”	6
Traffic	6
Transit/Rail	1
Tolls	1
HEALTH CARE	18%
Health Care	17
Medicaid	1
Soc Sec/ Medicare	1
BUDGET/SPENDING	12%
Balance Budget	8
Gov't Spending	3
Capital Budget	1
INFRASTRUCTURE	9%
PUBLIC SAFETY	7%
“Public Safety”	2
Crime	2
Drugs	2
ENVIRONMENT	7%
“Environment”	3
Climate Change	3
GOVERNMENT	3%
Government	1
Corruption	1
Polarization	1
OTHER	11%
Trump	3
Immigration	3
Gun Control	2
Water Rights/ Hirst	1
Energy	1
Values	1

Sample Profile

504 registered voters, selected at random from registered voter lists in Washington state, were interviewed December 27-30 by live, professional interviewers. 28% of the interviews were conducted on cell phones. The margin of sampling error is ±4.5% at the 95% level of confidence. This means, in theory, had this same survey been conducted 100 times, the results would be within ±4.5% of the results reported here at least 95 times.

REGION	
Seattle	10%
King County	21%
Pierce/Kitsap	15%
No. Puget Sound	17%
Western WA	17%
Eastern WA	20%
GENDER	
Male	50%
Female	50%
PARTY ID	
Democrat	33%
Republican	24%
Independent	43%
AGE	
18-35	9%
36-50	25%
51-64	38%
65+	27%
EDUCATION	
High School	16%
Some College / Voc-Tech	28%
College Degree	37%
Graduate Degree	20%
INCOME	
\$50,000 or less	20%
\$50 to 74,000	21%
\$75 to 99,000	17%
\$100,000+	25%
No Answer	17%

The Elway Poll

The Elway Poll is an independent, non-partisan analysis of public opinion in Washington and the Northwest, published since 1992.

PROPRIETARY QUESTIONS: Each quarter, space is reserved in the questionnaire for organizations to insert their own, proprietary questions. Sponsors are thus able to ask their own questions for a fraction of the cost of a full survey. Results, with demographic crosstabulations, are provided within three days after the interviews are completed.

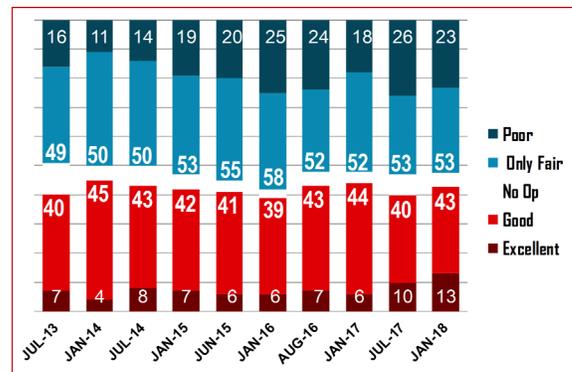
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Inslee Job Ratings Tick Up

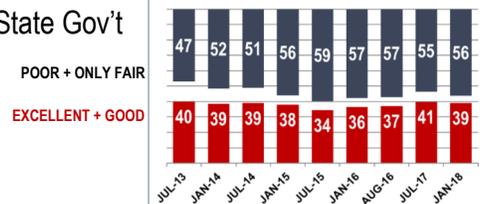
Governor Jay Inslee’s job performance ratings improved slightly this month, owing to a 3-point gain in the proportion of voters who rated his performance as “excellent” and a 3-point drop in the number who said “poor.”

- 43% said Inslee is doing an “excellent” (13%) or Good (30%) job, vs. 53% who said “only fair” (30%) or “poor” (23%).
- His overall ratings remain slightly higher than his ratings for four components of the job, all of which have been relatively stable since he took office.

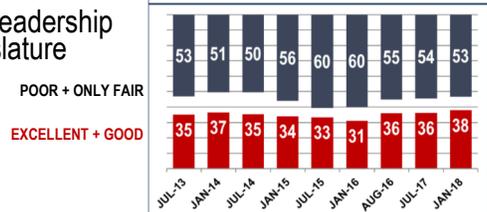
INSLEE’S OVERALL PERFORMANCE RATINGS



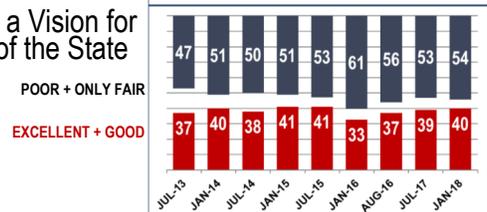
Managing State Gov't



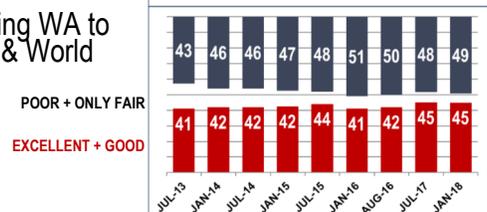
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