



Fixing Washington's Broken School Funding System

with Oliver Miska, David Knight, and Kendall Fujioka

January 9, 2025

Episode Summary

With school districts across Washington facing severe budget shortfalls, we explore solutions through the [People's Big 5](#) initiative. Education activist **Oliver Miska**, joined by UW researchers **Dr. David S. Knight** and **Kendall Fujioka**, break down why Washington's school funding system remains broken and how combining funding reform with progressive revenue could fix it. Learn why changing both how we raise money for schools and how we distribute it is crucial for creating an equitable education system that works for all students.

Each person's opinions are their own. Contact us at hello@rainydayrecess.org.

Episode Resources and Links

The People's Big 5 Campaign

- Resource hub & updates: <https://linktr.ee/fundwaschools>
- Organizing Toolkit <https://www.thepeoplesbig5.com/toolkit>
- Sign the pledge
<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1-jicspcGe4nGzDtm4S1ecjceQXzERxBVvt4wXQ8kJns/viewform>
- Linktree <https://linktr.ee/fundwaschools>
- [Big Five](#) in the South Seattle Emerald



Season 1 Episode 6 Show Notes

- Sunday organizing meetings (11am-noon, every other Sunday)
 - Sign up: <https://us06web.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZEuf--qqzosEtyZYFJxTIQWMo83lkqO9roA#/registration>
- Upcoming action days: March 5 and April 15, 2024

Other Advocacy Organizations

- Balance Our Tax Code Coalition <https://balanceourtaxcode.com/>
- Invest in Washington <https://www.investwanow.org/>
- Washington State PTA <https://wastatepta.org/>
- Washington State School Director's Association <https://wssda.org/>
- Washington Superintendent's Association <https://www.wasa-oly.org/>
- MLK Labor Council <https://mlklabor.org/>
- Seattle Council PTSA <https://scptsa.org/>
- Washington Ethnic Studies Now <https://waethnicstudies.com/>

Learn More About Washington Education Funding

- [Background and History - Basic Education Finance in the State of Washington](#) (Source: OSPI)
- [The Big Three: Common Priorities in Washington's Education Advocacy](#) (Source: WSSDA)
- [FUNDING FAQ](#) (Source: WSSDA)
- [A Citizen's Guide to WA K-12 Education Finance 2024](#) (Source: Washington Legislature)
- The People's Big 5 Reading List: <https://www.thepeoplesbig5.com/readings>
- [The Paramount Duty of the State: A Brief History of Educational Equity and Inequality in Washington State](#) by Professor Nancy Beadie (Source: UW)
- [Washington School Finance: Exploring the History and Present-Day Challenges for Fiscal Equity](#), by David S. Knight, Pooya Almasi, and JoLynn Berge
- [Education Finance 103: A People's Guide by Oliver Miska and Jeff Paul](#) the most recently published article mentioned by Oliver Miska at the South Seattle Emerald

Select David Knight and Kendall Fujioka References

- [Convening Superintendents to Envision Ample and Equitable School Funding for Every Washington Child](#), by Kendall Fujioka, David Knight, Anthony Craig, and Mia Tuan from University of Washington; Kelly Aramaki and William Jackson from Bellevue Public Schools; Trevor Greene from Yakima School District (August, 2024)
- [Research presentation to the House Finance Committee](#) (click "View Video" under 1/11/2024 1:30 PM) by David S. Knight (2024, January)
- [Post McCleary, WA school funding doesn't add up](#), by David Knight and Kendall Fujioka. Seattle Times Opinion-Editorial. (2023, March).



Season 1 Episode 6 Show Notes

- Knight, D. S., Baker, B., Srikanth, A., Weber, M., & Fujioka, K.* (2023). [Creating an adequate and equitable school finance system in Washington State: Recommendations for state policymakers](#).

Key Statistics

- Washington ranks 49th out of 50 states in regressive tax systems
- [Shift in support for tax related to wealth](#) (Source: KUOW)
- Washington spends 3.14% of GSP on K-12 education (national average: 3.53%)
- \$2,493 gap between higher and lower poverty districts after McCleary
- 2022 Property tax rates, per \$1,000 property value: Seattle (\$8.83) vs Mercer Island (\$7.36) vs Tukwila (\$12.09) vs Yakima (\$10.86) vs Whitman (\$14.09) vs [2022 vs. 2023 Property Tax Bills and Residential Median Values by City](#)

Related Bills and Other Legislative Documents

- [SB 5120 - 2025-26 Expanding the learning assistance program](#). Sponsors: Nobles, Riccelli
- [Final Report of the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance](#)

Related Episodes

- Seattle Hall Pass [S2 E11 - Can SPS go bankrupt? with Stephen Nielsen](#)
- [District Deep Dive with Alex Wakeman Rouse](#)
- [Cancelled Closures, Denied Recalls, and Performance Audits](#)
- [The Bomb Cyclone - November 19 School Board Meeting](#)

Featured Guests

- Oliver Miska
 - Community organizer with [Washington Ethnic Studies Now](#)
 - Journalist for [The South Seattle Emerald](#)
 - Political consultant for [Solidarity Policy and Public Affairs](#)
- [David S. Knight](#), PhD - Associate Professor at the University of Washington
 - [Danforth Educational Leadership Program](#)
 - [Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership](#)
- Kendall Fujioka - PhD student, [Educational Policy, Organization and Leadership](#) at UW