

LEGISLATIVE SESSION PRIORITIES

BACKGROUND

SBE Visits to Legislature

During the afternoon of January 13, Board members are encouraged to meet with their district legislators. Although SBE staff met with legislators often during session, these meetings have value because a message from a constituent always carries weight. SBE staff will provide the members with folders of information and handouts for the legislators. If you haven't done so yet, please contact your legislators to schedule a 15 minute meeting to discuss the work of the Board. Your first meeting can begin at 2:00 p.m.

Election Results and Committee Membership

The 62nd Legislature will convene for 105 days beginning January 10 and will end April 24. The Democrats have retained a majority in the Senate: 27-22 and in the House 56-42, but have a slimmer majority than in the previous Legislature.¹

The House has retained Representative Frank Chopp as the Speaker and the Senate has retained Senator Lisa Brown as the Majority leader. The new Senate Ways and Means Chair is Senator Ed Murray and the new House Ways and Means Chair is Representative Ross Hunter. The Education Committees have undergone major changes since last session. Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, 1st Legislative District, is remaining as the Chair of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee; however, neither of the past vice chairs was reelected (Senator Oemig and Senator Kauffman) and a few other members retired. The House Education Committee membership has also changed because Representative Dave Quall, 40th Legislative District, who was the long time House Education Committee Chair, has retired and will be replaced by Representative Sharon Tomiko Santos, 37th Legislative District. Below are the proposed education committee assignments for Democrats as of December 20, 2010 (final assignments for both Democrats and Republicans will be decided during the first week of session):

¹ The 2010 session has a Democratic majority in the Senate of 31-18 and the House has a Democratic majority of 61-37,

Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education:

- Sen. Rosemary McAuliffe (chair)
- Sen.-elect Nick Harper (vice-chair)*
- Sen. Tracey Eide
- Sen. Sharon Nelson*
- Sen. Rodney Tom
- Sen. Steve Litzow (Ranking Republican)*
- Sen. Curtis King
- Sen. Andy Hill*

House Education:

- Rep. Sharon Tomiko Santos (chair)
- Rep. Lytton (vice-chair)*
- Rep. Andy Billig*
- Rep. Fred Finn*
- Rep. Kathy Haigh
- Rep. Sam Hunt
- Rep. Connie Ladenburg*
- Rep. Marko Liias
- Rep. Marcie Maxwell
- Rep. John McCoy*
- Rep. Tim Probst
- Rep. Bruce Dammeier (Ranking Republican)
- Rep. Glenn Anderson (Asst. Ranking)
- Rep. John Ahern*
- Rep. Jan Angel*
- Rep. Cathy Dahlquist*
- Rep. Susan Fagan
- Rep. Mark Hargrove*
- Rep. Brad Klippert*
- Rep. Joel Kretz*
- Rep. J.T. Wilcox*

*Members are new to the education committees.

Budget Issues for the 2011 Legislative Session

The biggest challenge facing the 2011 Legislature will be how to address the significant budget deficits for the remaining part of 2009-11 budget that ends June 30, 2011 and the upcoming biennial budget for 2011-13. The state has continued to lose revenue and costs continue to increase for mandatory services such as medical services and corrections caseloads. With clear signals from the voters in November for no new taxes (Initiative 1053 passed requiring the Legislature to approve any increase in taxes by a two-thirds vote in both the House and Senate; the repeal of the tax increase on soda pop, candy, gum, and bottled water; and the defeat of Initiative 1098 to establish a state income tax) the Legislature's job will be to require larger cuts to current programs.

December Special Session and the Governor's Proposed Budgets

A special legislative session was held on December 11, to begin to address the \$1.1 million deficit. The Legislature passed a supplemental budget that reduced the current fiscal year budget by \$700 million. The reductions included:

- Elimination of funding for smaller class size in K-4.
- 4.2 percent reduction for higher education.

- 6.2 percent reduction for state agencies.
- Reduction in payment for Disability Lifeline, emergency funds to keep families off welfare, subsidized health insurance program for the poor; child support checks for welfare families; elimination of non-emergency adult dental care; closure of McNeil Island Corrections Center.

On December 17, 2010, the Governor released her **Proposed 2011 Supplemental Operating Budget** to close the \$400 million gap that still remained after the Legislature's December special session. Below are some details of the supplemental budget:

- Eliminate additional funds for K-4 education class size reduction for the 2010–11 school year.
- Reduce levy equalization payments to eligible districts by 6.287 percent for Fiscal Year 2011.
- \$18 million in cuts to LEA that are retroactive to the start of the 2010-2011 school year.
- Eliminate the Highly Capable Program.
- Eliminate the Summer Vocational Skills Center Program.
- Eliminate the Basic Health Plan beginning March 1, 2011.
- Eliminate the Disability Lifeline medical program and grants for those with a temporary disability.
- Reduction of \$253 million to the June apportionment through a budget shift to the first business day of July 2011.

On December 15, the Governor released her **Proposed 2011-13 Operating Budget** to address a \$4.6 billion shortfall, which includes cuts of almost \$2 billion from public education. Below are some details of the budget:

The Governor placed a priority on continued funding for:

- Preschool slots for four year olds (reduced slots for three year olds).
- All day kindergarten for the lowest income schools.
- Preservation of administration of state assessments and end of course assessments in high school level science and math.
- Incentive grants for school districts for new teacher and principal evaluations.
- Development of state teacher and principal evaluation models.
- Specialized instruction for School for the Blind and Center for Childhood Deafness and Hearing Loss.

The Governor proposes the following cuts:

- 10 percent across-the-board cuts and reductions in staff to most agencies, including SBE, PESB, and OSPI.
- 6.3 percent cut to Local Effort Assistance (LEA); districts that are close to the average will have less funding; districts farther away from the average will keep more funding.
- Two-year suspension of K-4 class size enhancements.
- Reductions in assessment administration for OSPI and ESDs and a decrease in what districts are reimbursed for "collection of evidence," from \$300 to \$200.
- The per pupil inflator rate will go to three percent in school year 2011-12 and five percent in school year 2012-13, compared to four percent each year last biennium.
- Elimination of many programs, including those targeted for dropout prevention, highly capable students, Reading Corps, and much more.
- All-day kindergarten is frozen at the current rate.

- Suspension of movement on the teacher salary schedule.
- Suspension of employee salary increases for all education and state government agencies.
- Suspension of class size reductions.
- Suspension of the National Board Certification Bonus program.
- Suspension of the K-4 enhancement, which is expected to eliminate 1,500 teacher jobs.
- Shift of \$253 million of the June apportionments into July 2011.
- Pilots for teacher/principal evaluations are funded for the next two years.
- Elimination of the Basic Health Care plan.
- Elimination of the Disability Lifeline grant.
- Reduction of three percent compensation for all state employees.
- Elimination of state general fund support for state parks.

The rest of the shortfall will be addressed through pension reform, fund transfers, and use of the state’s rainy day fund.

The Governor has also proposed a number of agency streamlines and consolidations, including: phase II consolidation of natural resource agencies, state government central functions, one office of civil rights (which would absorb all the ethnic commissions), and cutting additional boards and Governor appointments. An educational governance proposal will be announced in early January.

POLICY CONSIDERATION

Although the budgets will take center stage, plenty of policy issues will pop up and be debated during session. The State Board of Education (SBE) is tasked with providing advocacy and strategic oversight of public education in Washington State². Therefore, the SBE should consider taking positions on a selected number of issues that are expected to develop into bills.

SBE staff have a variety of methods of communicating the SBE’s priorities and positions to legislators and stakeholders, including one-on-one meetings, testifying at legislative hearings, and distributing informational flyers and other documents. In January, SBE staff will create a summary document nicknamed the “Legislative Leave Behind” to accompany the initiative flyers. The Leave Behind, and accompanying documents, will reflect the positions the SBE takes on any or all of the following issues.

Policy and Fiscal Issues

1. Washington State Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2016	
Origin	SBE revised graduation requirements for the Class of 2016.
Summary of Issue	The SBE approved its Washington State Graduation Requirements on November 10, 2010. The revised requirements will go into effect for the Class of 2016 and funding would need to begin in the 2011-12 school year for implementation of the requirement that the High School and Beyond Plan begin in grade eight.

² RCW 28A.305.130

1. Washington State Graduation Requirements for the Class of 2016	
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will submit its resolution on the new state high school graduation requirements to the education committees, but won't submit a bill to the Legislature. Due to the current fiscal situation, funding of the new graduation requirements will not be possible in the upcoming biennium. SBE will advocate for phase-in funding to begin before 2018 with the QEC and Legislature. It is anticipated that the SBE will adopt a rule for the non fiscal related items for the Class of 2016 sometime next year if the Legislature does not change the proposed SBE requirements. SBE staff will continue to work with legislators and other stakeholders to ensure the current high school graduation requirements are not diluted by any bill proposals.

2. Removing the Culminating Project as a Graduation Requirement for the 2011-13 School Years	
Origin	Governor proposed policy.
Summary of Issue	To provide flexibility and reduce requirements to school districts, the Governor may propose suspending the Culminating Project for the next two school years.
SBE Staff Recommendation	Due to the size of the budget deficit, SBE recommends supporting the temporary suspension of the Culminating Project graduation requirement, as proposed by the Governor.

3. Mathematics Assessment Graduation Requirement	
Origin	OSPI sponsored.
Summary of Issue	<p>In order to reduce administrative costs and avoid overwhelming students with multiple new tests, OSPI has proposed a temporary suspension of part of the mathematics assessment graduation requirement. OSPI has proposed that high school students in the Classes of 2013 and 2014 need only pass one math (Algebra I or Geometry) end-of-course (EOC) assessment for graduation. The current requirement of passing both of the math EOCs for graduation would be reinstated for the Class of 2015 and beyond.</p> <p>For the 2011-13 biennium, the Governor preserves administration of state assessments of student learning, including development of end-of-course assessments in high school-level science and mathematics. OSPI is directed to renegotiate with contractors to find the savings for the collection of evidence portfolio assessments. The Governor proposes that high school students in the Class of 2013 pass one math (Algebra I or Geometry) end-of-course (EOC) assessment for graduation. The Class of 2014 would have to pass both math EOCs for graduation.</p>

3. Mathematics Assessment Graduation Requirement	
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE support the Governor's position on students passing one math EOC for the Class of 2013 and two math EOCs for the Class of 2014 and continuing the support for the collection of evidence as an alternative assessment.

4. Science Assessment Graduation Requirement	
Origin	OSPI sponsored.
Summary of Issue	OSPI has proposed a temporary suspension of the science assessment graduation requirement. OSPI has proposed that implementation of the requirement be suspended until the Class of 2017 and 2018. The Class of 2017 would need to pass one science (biology, physical science or integrated science) EOC for graduation and the Class of 2018 and beyond would need to pass two science EOCs for graduation. For the 2011-13 biennium, the Governor maintains students in the Class of 2013 must pass one science EOC for graduation.
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will support the consideration of extending the science graduation requirement to the Class of 2015, provided that OSPI is able to provide specific steps with the assistance of public/private partnerships to enable districts to ensure students are ready to meet the high school science standard.

5. Temporary Reduction in the Basic Education Requirement of 180 School Days	
Origin	Possible legislation; one issue for consideration that emerged out of the Governor's work to transform state government.
Summary of Issue	The Governor's Committee on Transforming Washington's Budget recommended ways to reduce the state's budget deficit through K-12 policy changes, including reducing the school year to 175 days, increasing class size in K-12, streamlining administration, and giving flexibility to districts to adjust the length of the school year for different subgroups of students.
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will oppose reductions to the length of the school year. Basic Education requirements must be preserved regardless of any budget deficit. If the legislation moves forward, SBE will reduce the number of days permissible to waive or prohibit the use of the 180 day waiver requests by districts.

6. PESB/SBE Joint Policy Issues	
Origin	At the Joint November PESB/SBE meeting, the boards discussed support for a common legislative agenda.
Summary of Issue	<p>SBE and PESB joint priority areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support a meaningful evaluation system for teachers and principals. • Stay on track for QEC study to revamp educator compensation system in 2011. • Support strategies to close the achievement gap. • Fund focused professional development. • Implement e-certification and other common core data bases.
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will support any policy or budget bills that address these joint priorities.

7. OSPI/Department of Early Learning (DEL)	
Origin	OSPI and DEL have been working on ways to improve student readiness for kindergarten.
Summary of Issue	<p>OSPI and DEL are considering a bill to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement the piloted kindergarten readiness assessment. • Phased in full day kindergarten starting with lowest income schools first.
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will support this bill.

8. Quality Education Council Recommendations	
Origin	The Quality Education Council is charged with developing a ten year funding plan to implement an evolving basic education program .

8. Quality Education Council Recommendations	
Summary of Issue	The Quality Education Council (QEC) will recommend its priorities for basic education funding for the upcoming bienniums in January. At this time we expect that it will contain recommendations for the next biennium on making progress on funding K-12 provisions outlined in SHB 2776 including: phase-in of full day kindergarten; phase-in of smaller class size for K-4; transition to new pupil transportation funding; increased allocations for maintenance, supplies, and operating costs. Discussions are still underway about when funding phase-in for new graduation requirements would occur. More details will be provided at the SBE meeting, when the QEC report is completed.
SBE Staff Recommendation	SBE will continue to work hard with the QEC and others to ensure funding for phasing in our new graduation requirements happens as soon as the state fiscal situation improves.

Other Education-related Issues:

Possible bills on:

- Charter Schools.
- Financial Literacy.
- Reducing Graduation Requirements to Higher Education Coordinating Committee Minimums.
- Governor’s Education Governance Proposal.

Stakeholder Common Legislative Priorities

The SBE staff has provided some of common priorities of some of the stakeholder groups. These include: the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI), Washington State School Directors Association (WSSDA), Washington Association of School Administrators (WASA), Association of School Principals (AWSP), Partnership4Learning (PFL), and Excellent Schools Now (ESN)³ See Attachment A to view more detailed priorities:

1. Fully fund schools (OSPI, WSSDA, WASA, AWSP, WSPTA, WEA).
2. Statewide assessment graduation requirements adjustments (OSPI, AWSP, WEA).
3. No unfunded or underfunded mandates (WSSDA, AWSP, WASA).
4. Keep momentum with Education Reform Efforts (WSPTA, OSPI).
5. College and Work Ready Standards and Graduation Requirements (PFL and ESN).
6. Strengthen STEM education (AWSP, WSPTA, PFL).
7. Innovative schools (PFL, ESN).

³ ESN is a large coalition that includes the League of Education Voters, Stand for Children, Alliance for Education, the Black Collective, Tabor 100, Washington Roundtable, and numerous other groups)

EXPECTED ACTION

Approval of legislative policy and budget priorities one through eight, listed above.

Stakeholder Legislative Priorities

SBE staff has provided a summarized and reformatted list of priorities from stakeholder groups. Please refer to each group's publications or Web sites to view the priorities in their full and original form. Some of the priorities represent long-standing policy priorities and others represent specific priorities for the 2011 Legislative Session because not all groups have formulated session priorities, to date.

WSPTA (www.wastatepta.org):

- Keep momentum with Education Reform Efforts.
- Strengthening math and science education.
- State-wide adoption of early phonological awareness screening and implementation of systematic literacy instruction.
- Not just seniority for "reduction in force" policies.
- Fully fund schools.
- New research-based state teacher compensation model that emphasizes rewarding teacher effectiveness in improving student learning.

WASA (www.wasa-oly.org):

- WASA will only support bills and budget items that address the conclusions declared by Judge John Erlick in the February 4, 2010, King County Superior Court, school funding decision.

WSSDA (www.wssda.org):

- Maintain LEA.
- No unfunded mandates.
- Fully fund schools.
- Consolidation should be locally determined.

AWSP (www.awsp.org):

- Fully fund basic education by 2018.
- No unfunded or underfunded mandates.
- After basic education is fully funded, implement the graduation requirements proposed by SBE.
- Maintain current assessment graduation requirements for reading, writing, and math. Delay the science assessment graduation requirement.
- Strengthen STEM.
- Maintain current leadership intern and academy programs and restore funding for the mentor program.
- Continue funding for the teacher/principal evaluation pilot program.
- Promote outdoor education; and solve issues for retiring administrators.

WEA (www.washingtonea.org):

- Better compensation for public school employees remains WEA's number one priority and is one of the most important issues facing our state's public schools. Nothing is more important to improving the quality of public schools than having well-trained, well-qualified educators teaching our children.
- Opposes the sole use of the WASL, its replacement, or any other single test, in making high-stakes decisions about students and schools. WEA supports the assessment of student learning by using multiple measures of student and school success.
- Stable and adequate funding for public education is essential to the continued success of schools and students.
- WEA members support higher academic standards for students, including the state's Essential Academic Learning Requirements (EALRS). Public schools need additional resources to meet higher academic standards: smaller class sizes, better compensation, more learning opportunities for students, professional development and safe schools. School accountability legislation should provide the help needed to meet high standards -- not punishment.

OSPI (www.k12.wa.us)

- Fully fund our schools.
- Increase student achievement, reduce student dropouts.
- Redesign the State Assessment System.
- Expand Career and Technical Education.
- Invest in early learning.

Partnership for Learning Priorities (www.partnership4learning.org)

- College and work ready standards and graduation requirements.
- Effective teachers and leaders that drive student performance.
- Strong state governance that leads to strong system performance.
- Innovative schools that meet the diverse needs of students.
- Policies that accelerate student performance in math and science.

Excellent Schools Now (www.excellentschoolsnow.org)

- College and Work Ready Standards, Assessments, and Graduation Requirements.
- Effective Teaching.
- Effective Principals.
- Innovation and charter schools.