

# The Washington State Board of Education

Governance | Achievement | High School & College Preparation |  
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## State Board of Education Spotlight

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On Friday, Governor Gregoire held a press conference to preview a forthcoming, all-cuts budget designed to address the anticipated revenue shortfall. She also tasked legislators with the difficult work of addressing the budget crises, beginning with a special legislative session (scheduled to start November 28).

During the press conference, the Governor's office released a list of [budget reduction alternatives](#), outlining possible cuts in nine state spending areas, including education.

The cuts are comprehensive and will likely exceed what the Governor actually proposes in her budget, which is scheduled for release in mid to late November. Education may face severe cuts. Levy equalization, funding for all-day Kindergarten, reduced K-3 class sizes, and more are all in danger of funding reductions.

The pending cost-cutting, capitol conversations are all-too familiar to most families and citizens throughout the state. Restricted family incomes invoke kitchen-table conversations around what can be saved and what can be sacrificed, no less stressful than they are important.

A tight budget can be a catalyst for an important values conversation, and can, ultimately, evolve into a road map for sustainability, throughout the economic downturn and into recovery.

Similar kitchen-table conversations will soon be happening in the capitol halls as the special session gets underway.

Though the inevitable reductions stemming from this legislative session will likely have a dramatic impact on Washington citizens, we must acknowledge the existing opportunity in this session.

The dour economic realities should prompt our state to reaffirm our values. Ideally, our final state budget should be reflective of our state's priorities.

## Stay in the Know!



This e-newsletter is just one of the many ways to make sure you have the latest education news.

Our [website](#) is updated daily, and we also make good use of [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [RSS feeds](#), and our [YouTube channel](#) to ensure you stay abreast of the latest news in P-12 education.

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Of course, a values conversation requires a comprehensive discussion, not only about what should be saved, but also what might be sacrificed (at least temporarily). No one area of spending can be examined in isolation, and it is for this reason and more that our budget discussions will be part promising, part painful, and entirely necessary.

Economic realities precipitate a values discussion this winter, and education is one such value. We are hopeful that the regular and special sessions end with an acknowledgement and reaffirmation of its worth.

On behalf of the Washington State Board of Education,

Ben Rarick  
Executive Director

## Diving Into Data

The Education Research & Data Center ([EDRC](#)) and the Center for Education Data & Research ([CEDR](#)) host excellent education data tools that are definitely worth a look.

The P-20 High School Feedback Report, created by EDRC, provides school and district synopses of graduates' workforce and education experiences after high school. As one example, users can not only see what colleges a high school's graduates attended, but also view the secondary course taking patterns of those students.

CEDR's Washington Achievement Data Explorer ([WADE](#)) is a powerful district and school comparison program that blends 2002-2010 assessment data from the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction ([OSPI](#)) with Google's dynamic chart tool.

Visitors can dive into year by year data on a variety of indicators beyond just reading and math scores. WADE presents data on school demographics and even district characteristics (such as average teacher experience, per pupil spending, student to teacher ratios, and more). The "dynamic" element of the site is a slider bar that alters the charts in real time. It is a great way to "see" the evolution of data trends.

The site serves as a nice complement to OSPI's [Washington State Report Card](#), and together the two provide users with a comprehensive analysis of schools and districts' demographics, performance, and more.

## Graduation Requirements Rule Changes

We are seeking your input on proposed rule changes to the state high school graduation requirements. The Board is holding a public hearing on the proposed rule changes on November 9 at 1:00 p.m. at ESD 112 in Vancouver, Washington. Those wishing to provide comment can also write us at [sbe@k12.wa.us](mailto:sbe@k12.wa.us).

What are the proposed changes?

The State Board is considering rule revisions that OSPI determined would have no state fiscal cost. These changes were forwarded to the education committees during the 2011 legislative session and to the Quality Education Council, as required in [RCW 28A.230.090](#).

Proposed rule changes maintain the state-mandated number of credits at 20, but include the following adjustments:

- Increase English from 3 to 4 credits.
- Increase social studies from 2.5 to 3 credits (adding .5 credit of civics per RCW 28A.230.093).
- Decrease electives from 5.5 to 4 credits.
- Clarify that 2 credits of health and fitness are .5 credits health and 1.5 credits fitness.
- Make satisfactory completion of Washington state history a noncredit requirement noted on students' transcripts.
- Substitute a non-time-based definition of a credit for the current time-based definition (150-hour credit requirement).
- Enable a "two for one" policy that would allow students to earn one credit from taking a Career and Technical Education (CTE) equivalent course while satisfying two graduation requirements

Note: Any rule changes approved during the November 2011 meeting would go into effect for the graduating class of 2016.

Input provided by November 4 will be shared with Board members prior the November 9 meeting.

### **Common Core Assessments and Future Policy Considerations**

As a state partner of the SMARTER Balanced Assessment Consortium (SBAC), Washington is committed to using the Common Core State Standards (CCSS) assessments as its federal accountability metric.

For high school students, the English / language arts and math summative CCSS assessments will be given in the spring of their junior year (beginning in 2015).

This raises interesting policy questions that the Board will be seeking to understand, such as, "What role will the 11th grade CCSS summative assessments play in state graduation requirements? Or, should the 11th grade CCSS summative assessments replace the current end of course exams in math or the High School Proficiency Exams in reading and writing as graduation requirements?"

We will devote time to exploring these issues and more at future meetings.

### **Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) Reauthorization**

In September, Secretary of Education Arne Duncan announced that the U.S. Department of Education would begin to grant broad waivers to states from some of the most contentious ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act) requirements, in exchange for a series of state reforms similar to the expectations within Race to the Top and the Obama administration's Blueprint for Reform, its 2010 policy recommendations for reauthorization. Washington State is currently considering a waiver request.

In October, the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee passed an ESEA reauthorization bill sponsored by the committee Chairman, Senator Tom Harkin, a Democrat from Iowa, and Ranking Member Senator Michael Enzi, a Republican from Wyoming. Reauthorization of ESEA has been repeatedly attempted

for the past four years since the most recent authorization expired in 2007.

The Harkin-Enzi bill contains the following key elements:

- The current Adequate Yearly Progress system would be eliminated and schools would no longer be required to reach 100 percent student proficiency by 2014. Instead, schools would have to show "continuous improvement."
- States would have to adopt career and college ready standards for language arts, mathematics, science, and English language proficiency.
- States would be required to identify the lowest five percent of their schools, similar to the current School Improvement Grant (SIG) regulations. States would have some flexibility in implementation of intervention models currently allowed for SIG grants.
- States would also be required to identify the schools with the largest achievement gaps, and those schools would need to develop plans to close the gaps.

Senator Harkin said that it is possible that the bill could be approved by Congress before January 1, 2012, which would eliminate the need for state waivers to ESEA.

More information and live committee hearings can be viewed at the Senate Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee [website](#).

### **Board Member Highlight - Dr. Sheila Fox - Appointed - Bellingham, Washington**

Dr. Sheila Fox is a Special Education Professor at Western Washington University, where she serves as Associate Dean of Woodring College of Education.

Dr. Fox began her career in education as a Peace Corps volunteer in Tonga in the South Pacific and taught in special education classrooms in Australia and at the Experimental Education Unit at the University of Washington. She taught university courses in Australia and Canada, before beginning at Western Washington University.

Prior to her appointment to the State Board of Education,

Dr. Fox served for six years on the Professional Educator Standards Board. When asked why she volunteers for the State Board of Education, she replied that she believes that P-13 policy ultimately influences the content of educator preparation programs. "We really are one education system with multiple options for students. It's important that we have a coherent vision of education options for our citizens, ranging from early childhood through post-secondary education. An educated and civil society depends on that. My educator preparation perspective is one component of a broader vision, and that's why I'm honored to be at the table."

Dr. Fox's personal interests include spending time in the Canadian Gulf Islands where she has a seasonal residence on Saturna Island. She reports that numerous deer have discouraged planting a garden there, but that she's nurturing four, fence-protected olive trees. She imagines post-retirement days sitting on the front porch reading novels and eating home-grown olives. No, she doesn't know how to brine them for eating, yet, but she says that with library and Internet assistance, that will change.

You can learn more about Sheila Fox and other Board members by visiting our [Board member roster](#).

## Upcoming Board Meeting

November 9-10  
ESD 112  
Vancouver, Washington

Meeting materials are available on our [website](#) prior to the meeting. Email your thoughts and questions to SBE at [sbe@k12.wa.us](mailto:sbe@k12.wa.us).