



Washington State
School Directors' Association

Legislative Update

By [Marie Sullivan](#), WSSDA Director of Governmental Relations

Friday, November 8, 2013

Session, again?

Legislators gathered in Olympia November 7 for the third special session of 2013. The special session was called by Gov. Jay Inslee to encourage the Legislature to pass \$8.4 billion in tax breaks designed to secure Boeing's commitment to manufacture the 777X in Washington state. House and Senate budget committees reviewed the tax incentives ([SB 5952/HB 2089](#)) and appropriations bills ([HB 2088/SB 5953](#)) at committee meetings this afternoon.

In a November 5 press release announcing the special session, Inslee put a number of issues on the agenda as part of the 777X package. The Governor may propose topics, but cannot tell what the Legislature what to do and cannot limit the amount of time they meet. Special sessions can run up to 30 days; this one looks set to be fairly quick, now that the Senate Majority Caucus has indicated it is not ready to adopt a transportation revenue package.

Lawmakers will convene Saturday and work through the day in an attempt to complete their business quickly. Sources say they will not work on Sunday or Monday, in honor of Veteran's Day, but could return Tuesday if needed. Legislators do not expect to work beyond this core issue. No K-12 education bills are expected to be raised during the special session, although some money is being added to the supplemental budget for aerospace worker education and training.

The 2014 session will begin January 13 and is scheduled for 60 days.

State Board seeks input on accountability framework draft rules

As a result of [E2SSB 5329 \(2013\)](#), the State Board of Education has been directed to propose rules for the new accountability framework. The new Achievement Index will create a unified system of support for challenged schools that aligns with basic education, increases the level of support based on the magnitude of the need, and uses data for decisions.

Proposed rule changes have been drafted and are available for review on the [SBE web site](#). A short [video](#) explanation by SBE Research Director Linda Drake provides a nice introduction to the process. The Board will discuss the [draft rules](#) (rule changes follow staff briefing documents, so scroll through the pages) at the November 14-15 meeting in Vancouver. Districts are encouraged to review the proposed rule changes, particularly as they relate to the criteria to be used to keep or release a district from Level 1 of Required Action District (RAD) status, or to move a district into Level 2. One of the issues is whether a school has made "recent and significant progress" and the new rules would create a definition.

The draft rules read: "Recent and significant progress shall be defined as progress occurring within the two most recently completed school years, which is determined by the board (State Board) to be substantial enough to put the school on track to exit the list of persistently lowest-achieving schools list ... if the rate of progress is sustained for an additional three years. Schools meeting their annual measurable objectives

(AMOs) for the 'all students' group for two consecutive years ... may also be deemed to have made recent and significant progress under this section."

In addition, while the draft rules closely mirror language in the enacted law they also include specific timelines for action plans and responding to the accountability process. For instance, a Level 2 action plan would need to be submitted by May 30 of the year preceding implementation. In situations where OSPI and the school district disagree on the action plan, OSPI would have until July 15 to submit the plan to the SBE for approval.

Also new are proposed "guiding principles" for the new accountability framework, including shared goal-setting, recognition for success, aligning the state's graduation requirement to performance levels associated with career and college readiness, and much more. Directors are encouraged to read these carefully, as they will set the foundation for SBE decision making in the future. (See WAC 180-17-100 – the underlined text is all new proposed language.)

Feedback on the draft rules can be made in writing to the SBE (sbe@k12.wa.us) or during public comment (Nov. 14: 11:05-11:30 a.m. or Nov. 15: 11:45-noon) at the Board meeting. The Board is scheduled to take action directing staff to file the next stage of rule-making and create a formal public comment period and public hearing, probably sometime early January. It is difficult to make substantive changes to draft rules once they are in the formal process, so districts are encouraged to respond by November 14th if possible.

QEC grapples with 1,080 hours, recommendations

The [Quality Education Council](#) is trying to cram four meetings into as many months with an eye to making policy and budget recommendations for 2014 by the end of the year.

At the October 28 meeting, the [QEC heard reports](#) on WaKIDS and early learning, implementing the new state accountability system, recommendations from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Committee, and activities associated with [ESHB 2261 \(Chapter 548, Laws of 2009\)](#).

School directors are encouraged to listen to the [meeting on TVW](#), particularly the last item on 24 credits and 1,080 hours of instruction for grades 7-12 which begins in the 2014-15 school year. This issue is starting to get some attention, as are facility capacity issues associated with full-day kindergarten and K-3 class sizes.

The next meeting is scheduled for Monday, November 18 in Olympia.

The QEC was established through ESHB 2261 to oversee and make recommendations on implementing the redefined program of basic education. It is co-chaired by Sen. Andy Hill, R-Redmond and Rep. Kristine Lytton, D-Anacortes.

Budget sheets

The ink was dry on the budget bill and legislators returned to their home districts touting an unprecedented \$1 billion investment in public schools. But did the work this year really represent \$1 billion in new basic education funding?

While many legislators might argue \$1 billion is \$1 billion, OSPI has created budget sheets that may tell a slightly different story. Many thanks to OSPI Chief Financial Officer JoLynn Berge and her staff for compiling a comparison of 2008-09 funding (the school year for funding used in the McCleary case) to estimated funding for the 2012-13 school year. The budget sheets show per pupil funding for the comparison years, as well as projected funding (what would have been) for school districts based on the implicit price deflator. Increased enrollment (or decreased enrollment) is one of the many factors that need a close look when reviewing the funding numbers.

If your district hasn't taken a look at these numbers yet, check out the [link](#) to the "Funding Comparison: School Year 2008-09 to School Year 2013-14" and use the drop down bar to access a specific district. WSSDA and WASA hope this information will be useful and something your district can use when talking with legislators this year.

WSSDA boards sets 2014 legislative priorities

Just in time for legislative meetings and the special session this month, the WSSDA Board of Directors adopted [priorities](#) for the 2014 session.

In addition to keeping the pressure on lawmakers to invest the dollars necessary to implement ESHB 2261 and meet *McCleary*, the Board wants the 2014-15 supplemental budget to include two days of professional development funding for all classroom teachers. OSPI estimates it will cost \$23 million per day for state-funded classroom teachers, and an additional \$3 million to cover local-funded teachers. With the new evaluation system, Common Core, and Next Generation Science Standards knocking on the door, funding professional development is more critical than ever.

Another priority will be to encourage the Legislature to get in and out of this 60-day session with no major policy changes or new mandates for schools. "Our system is at capacity," said WSSDA President Debra Long, Central Valley. "We need time to implement with fidelity and consistency the changes the legislature has enacted in the past few years."

The list of 2014 [priorities](#) and [positions](#), as ranked at the September Legislative Assembly, is available on the [WSSDA web site](#).

Governor's office changes

Mary Alice Heuschel, who has served as Governor Jay Inslee's chief of staff for nearly a year, is changing jobs. Heuschel helped establish Gov. Inslee's Results Washington process and will lead the governor's performance measurement effort on an interim basis.

Long-time Inslee aide Joby Shimomura is stepping in as the new chief of staff. Shimomura has served on the governor's executive team since Inslee took office in January. She previously served as Inslee's Congressional chief of staff for six years and had managed several of his campaigns, dating back to his first run for governor in 1996.

In a press release November 6, the Governor thanked Heuschel for her service this past year, saying she "helped set a positive direction for our state." Inslee said he was thankful she had agreed to stay on with his administration to focus on the critical second phase of Results Washington.

Heuschel initially helped on the Inslee transition team last winter. She left her job as superintendent of the Renton School District to serve as the governor's chief of staff. It is not uncommon or unusual for governors to change their chiefs of staff several times during their administration.

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