



WASHINGTON STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

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2009 LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

2009 Legislative Session Information

The 61st Legislature will start on the Monday, January 12th with the key purpose of developing a balanced two-year budget in light of the projected revenue shortfall. This session occurs on an odd year and will therefore last for 105 days. During the session, the Senate will develop the first set of budget bills through consideration of the Governor's budget and any economic news. The budget bills will be reviewed by both chambers of the Legislature and considered for voting near the end of the session in April.

Although there will be some new faces on the Hill this year, Senator Rosemary McAuliffe will remain the chair of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee and Representative Dave Quall will remain chair of the House of Representatives Education Committee. There have been some changes to the structure of the finance committees. The Senate Ways and Means Committee will continue to be chaired by Senator Margarita Prentice with two Vice Chairs will be Senator Rodney Tom (vice chair - Operating Budget) and Senator Karen Fraser (vice chair - Capital Budget). The House of Representatives has renamed the Appropriations Committee to "Ways and Means" and it will be chaired by Representative Kelli Linville. The Appropriations Sub-Committee on Education has been provided more authority and renamed the Education Appropriation Committee with Representative Kathy Haigh as the chair.

The State's overall revenue is projected to create a \$5.7 billion budget shortfall through the 2009 - 2011 biennium. Governor Gregoire released her 2009-11 Budget and her Supplemental 2009 Budget on December 18th. In order to meet the revenue shortfall, the Governor proposes cuts across all of state government in her 2009-11 Budget and the spending down of the budget stabilization account.

Budgets aside, here are some additional subjects that may be heard in legislative committees during the session:

- K-12 funding formula and definition of Basic Education proposed by the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force;
- State Board of Education work on high school graduation requirements, accountability, and the continued work with OSPI on math and science standards and curriculum;

- Professional Educator Standards Board work on the math and science teacher shortage, and strategies to assist teachers of English Language Learners;
- Washington Assessment of Student Learning;
- Closing the achievement gaps;
- Dropout prevention;
- Other possible agency rule changes, such as the State Board of Health's proposed changes to the school environmental health and safety rules;
- Subjects which are ongoing or have been continued from last session, such as the need for more data, COLA, interstate compact on military children, school transportation, and K-12 school construction; and
- Potential new subjects, such as online learning.

Governor Gregoire's Proposed Budgets

Specific to the Board

In the Governor's proposed Supplemental 2009 Budget, the State Board of Education received funds to review OSPI's science curricular menu recommendations. In the Governor's proposed 2009-11 Budget, the Board received cuts in its operating expenses and was not provided funds for its proposal to personalize education for high school students. In addition, the cross-the-board hiring freeze and cuts that have already been in effect will carry forward into the next biennium.

Governor's Proposed Budget

	Current SBE Budget Fiscal Year '09	SBE Request	Pre-Governor's Budget initial cuts for SBE	Governor's Proposed Budget for SBE
2009 Supplemental Budget	\$ 815,000	* \$ 150,000	\$ 75,000	\$ 896,000
2009-11 Maintenance		\$ 1,895,000	NA	\$ 1,630,000
2009-11 Policy enhancement for Personalized Education for High School Students		\$ 820,000		\$ 0

* Review of OSPI 's Science Curricular Menu

General Summary

“Because education is the foundation for our future,”¹ education received the smallest cuts. The cuts were also less in other programs that affect children, including health care and child protective services. Public safety programs also received smaller cuts. The proposed spending of \$12 billion for public school programs includes a 5.6 percent reduction, specifically I-728 funding is reduced by 21 percent in 2009-10 and 23 percent in 2010-11; Local Effort Assistance is reduced by 33 percent each year; the I-732 COLA is suspended each year.

Many education programs and allocations are eliminated or changed significantly in the proposed budget. Professional development for math and science education has been eliminated; however, the two state-funded Learning Improvement Days are targeted for implementing new math and science standards. The teacher mentorship program (Teacher Assistance Program) is suspended and the Professional Educator Standards Board is required to redesign the program. Many other programs are eliminated or sustain significant reductions. The Governor’s proposed Budget is the first step in the process of creating a state budget. The legislature will take the Governor’s proposals along with the mid-session economic forecasts and create their own 2009-11 Budget, which will be considered for passage near the end of the legislative session.

The Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force Proposal

The Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force recently adopted an amended proposal that includes the State Board of Education’s (SBE) proposals for CORE 24 and for Accountability. A final proposal containing a new definition of Basic Education and a new K-12 funding formula is expected to be presented to the legislature at the beginning of the Legislative Session. The recommendations from the Task Force will not be the only ones considered during the session. It is likely that other proposals, like ones from the Full Funding Coalition and Dan Grimm, may be submitted as bills and considered by the two Chambers.

CORE 24

CORE 24 was integral in the work of the Task Force, as seen in the first bullet of the proposal’s Key Draft Recommendations: “Define basic education as the opportunity for students to meet proposed new high school graduation requirements.” CORE 24 was used in drafting the instructional elements of the new definition of Basic Education and to identify the resources needed for districts to provide it. The elements considered during the drafting included the average number of hours of instruction during a year (which requires at least six periods per day), the number of teachers required, and additional resources that may be needed. In the proposal, the state would provide resources to enable districts to provide supplemental instruction to underachieving students,

¹ Governor Gregoire’s Proposed 2009-11 Budget and Policy Highlights, Dec. 2008

transitional bilingual instruction for English Language Learners, and special education services for students with disabilities, so as to provide the students with a reasonable opportunity to meet the graduation requirements. The Task Force's proposal also requires the legislature to approve any requirements if SBE proposes a set of graduation requirements that would have a fiscal impact before taking effect.

Accountability

The SBE's work on accountability was also highlighted in the Task Force's Key Draft Recommendations: *"Implement the State Board of Education's proposed accountability system principles."* In the text of the document, it specifies the inclusion of the proposed Accountability Index, which uses multiple criteria to evaluate school and district performance; that schools with exemplary performance will be identified as well as those experiencing problems; that voluntary targeted assistance will be provided to struggling schools; that timelines for improvement will be established; and that SBE will require districts to take specified actions in the event of no improvement.

180 School Days

In the proposal, school districts would provide 180 days of instruction unless they receive a waiver from SBE. However, waivers cannot be used for professional development or for teacher/parent-guardian conferences, and the total number of 180-day waivers authorized statewide by SBE cannot impact more than two percent of the overall student population. In a related issue, professional development days will be increased from the current two Learning Improvement Days to ten days each year.

Other Elements

The Task Force's proposal uses a set of "model schools" in order to provide funding. Although, the model schools are not a mandate for how school districts should structure their schools. The model schools used in the proposal will be available for review by the public and can be a starting point for discussions about the use of resources at the local level. A state-provided, common statewide student information system is also proposed that can connect information about students, students' test scores, teachers, and courses in real time. The system will also include a dropout early warning system.

The proposal recommends developing an incentive compensation program that awards a monetary bonus to all school staff for building-level student academic achievement. Awards will be determined based on multiple measures of student performance, including standardized test scores and student retention in secondary schools. Funding will also be added to the Future Teachers Conditional Scholarship and Loan Repayment Program for teachers and educational staff associates degree candidates in documented shortage areas such as math, science, bilingual instruction, and special education.

The proposal identifies that an oversight/implementation group should be appointed to analyze and evaluate progress in implementing the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force recommendations with periodic reports to the

legislature and a six-year sunset. The goal of the proposal is to be ready to implement the new funding formulas in 2011-12 in school districts, which requires authorization by the 2011 Legislature and budget development beginning in mid-2010.

Summary

During the legislative session, the budget deficit will be a shadow over all issues. Although the SBE is not proposing any specific policy legislation of its own, its work will be recognized through its connections to reports and recommendations that will be presented this session by legislatively created work groups, such as the Basic Education Finance Joint Task Force, the Washington Assessment of Student Learning Legislative Group, the Professional Educator Standard's Board math and science teacher supply task force, reports on Achievement Gaps from several state boards and commissions, OSPI's data feasibility study, and OSPI's Interstate Compact on Military Children Task Force, just to name a few. SBE staff will provide weekly updates to the Board during the Legislative Session, about issues and bills related to the work of the SBE.