



**2016 WASA / WSSDA / WASBO LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE**

DAY ON THE HILL • OLYMPIA, WA • FEBRUARY 1, 2016

# HOT TOPICS

## Legislator Contact Form



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

School District: \_\_\_\_\_

Legislators contacted / summary of discussion: \_\_\_\_\_

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Please provide us with your feedback:

- Log your activities and meetings during the “Day on the Hill.”
- Return the form to a WSSDA/WASA staff member, or fax, email, or mail your comments to us.

By taking the time to record your activities, you support the ongoing advocacy efforts of our organizations. Thank you.

## 2016 Supplemental Operating Budget

The 2015 Legislature left Olympia in July, following a grueling, record-breaking 176-day affair, with a final, compromise 2015–17 Operating Budget expending \$38 billion. K–12 education received a \$2.9 billion increase, including \$1.3 billion that was funneled directly into basic education to inch towards fully funding the state’s constitutional paramount duty. Legislators are very proud of the progress they have made, yet the significant increases in *McCleary*-related basic education funding are still well-short of the recommendations from the Legislature’s own Joint Task Force on Education Funding, tremendously short of the promises the State made to the Supreme Court and far less than needed to address school districts’ financial obligations.

**Anticipated Investments and Revenue:** While funding to comply with the *McCleary* decision and to fully comply with the constitutional paramount duty is behind schedule, the Legislature appears unlikely to make additional K–12 investments in 2016. There is little available revenue and even less of an appetite to address additional revenue. Since the current two-year budget was adopted, revenues have increased moderately beyond forecasted expectations, about \$245 million more than predicted in June. This is another sign that our economy is stabilizing, which is positive. Unfortunately, increases in State expenses continue to outpace growth in revenue. Since June, State costs (mandatory maintenance level increases and unanticipated expenses) have grown more than \$700 million. This leaves approximately \$359 million available in the Ending Fund Balance for the remainder of the biennium.

**Levy Reform:** Failure to promptly address the constitutional underfunding of educator salaries will force many school districts over the “levy cliff.” This is due to legislation adopted in 2010 which expanded school district levy capacity. The bill provided for a four percent increase in school district levy lids and increased state funding for Local Effort Assistance (LEA or “levy equalization”) by two

## 2016 Supplemental Capital Budget

There is little available capacity under the State’s debt limit, so any potential additional funding in the 2016 Supplemental Capital Budget will likely be minor. School construction, however, continues to be a priority for many legislative leaders in both houses. Recently, the Legislature has done an admirable job of finding additional resources for K–12 school construction; legislators need to be thanked for their efforts to enhance K–12 construction.

percent. Those increases, however, are temporary and are set to expire on January 1, 2018. School districts across the state are scheduled to collectively lose almost a half billion dollars in local levy capacity and LEA funding beginning in the 2017–18 school year.

WASA/WSSDA/WASBO are supporting legislation to temporarily extend the sunset of the levy lid and LEA or other provisions that will hold school district budgets harmless until the Legislature meets the full cost of basic education employee compensation and addresses levy reform. If local levy capacity and LEA funding is decreased without a corresponding increase in state funding, many school districts will go over the “levy cliff” and will have difficulty meeting financial obligations, forcing deep budget cuts and substantial employee layoffs. Because of the timing of school districts’ budgeting processes, there is some urgency in tackling this issue in the 2016 Session. Waiting until 2017 would still force districts to make potentially damaging budget decisions.

**Compensation:** Because the Legislature continues to wait to step up to its constitutional obligation to fully fund basic education labor costs, local districts continue to face immense bargaining pressure from their local unions. The longer it takes for a solution, the more the pressure will mount, forcing districts to provide (sometimes unsustainable) local salary enhancements. Those enhancements come in the form of TRII (Time, Responsibilities, Incentives, & Innovation) contracts, which further increases local districts’ reliance on levies. As part of the transition to full state funding of K–12 compensation, WASA/WSSDA/WASBO urge the Legislature to take action in 2016 to limit local compensation to work time outside of the program of basic education, protecting districts at the bargaining table and moving towards a more equitable compensation system.

**Funding for Actual Costs:** It is important to remind legislators, however, that further increases are necessary to ensure funding more closely reflects school district education specifications and actual school construction costs. Improvements in the State’s funding formulas for school construction continue to be needed to ensure the Student Space Allocation at least meets national averages and the Construction Cost Allocation reflects actual costs.

**Construction Commitments to Basic Education:** Legislators should be applauded for their efforts last year to provide additional resources, on top of the “base” Capital Budget, to fund additional classrooms for all-day kindergarten and smaller class sizes. Unfortunately, the \$200 million provided was a drop in the bucket compared to the nearly \$2.0 billion expected cost to fund an additional 5,700 classrooms. The Supreme Court has clarified that enhanced funding of all-day kindergarten and class size reduction is essential, but “the State must account for the actual costs to schools of providing these components of basic education,” noting that the duty to amply fund education “must be borne by the State, not local districts.” As such, it is also vital that school

## Teacher and Substitute Shortage

When the Washington State Legislature made a commitment in redefining the definition of “Basic Education” to include funding of full-day kindergarten and significant K–3 class size reduction by the 2017–18 school year, they were not likely prepared for the unintended consequences resulting from the swinging pendulum of teacher and substitute supply and demand. Washington public schools are facing a crisis in finding qualified teachers and sufficient qualified substitutes.

**Teacher Shortage:** Over the past three years, Washington teachers have been leaving the profession at a rate that our state has not seen for at least the past decade. According to a survey of 737 principals conducted by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) in November 2015, 45 percent of principals surveyed were not able to staff all of their needed classrooms with fully certified teachers who met the job qualifications. More than 80 percent were required to employ individuals as classroom teachers with emergency certificates or as long-term substitutes. 93 percent indicated that they were “struggling” or in a “crisis” mode in finding qualified candidates. The areas with the greatest shortages include elementary, special education, mathematics, science and career and technical education teachers.

Teacher shortages are expected to continue in special education, mathematics, science, elementary education, and early childhood. Specific to implementation of full-day kindergarten and K–3 class size reduction, it anticipated that the state will need to hire approximately 10,000 new K–3 teachers in the next 3–4 years. In the 2014–15 school year, approximately 7,300 new teachers were hired by school districts. Of these, approximately 15 percent (1,095) were from out-of-state. Currently, in-state production of new teachers with Elementary and Early Childhood endorsements total only 1,500 teachers/year.

districts receive an influx in capital funds for additional space to accommodate all-day kindergarten and a drastic reduction in K–3 class sizes.

Finally, it is expected that a local contribution will still be required to access most state construction assistance. Given that expectation, WASA/WSSDA/WASBO urge the Legislature to advance a constitutional amendment to the people authorizing school district bond issues to be approved with a simple majority vote. As you visit with your policy makers, it is important to share your stories and data on this topic, as well as the impact the current supermajority requirement has had on your district.

**Substitute Shortage:** Finding substitutes is also extremely difficult with virtually all school districts reporting a significant shortage in substitute teachers. In the same survey of principals last fall, 98 percent of principals indicated that they were “struggling” or in a “crisis” mode in finding substitutes. A total of 75 percent of principals reported that they had to personally cover a class in the past five school days because substitutes were not available. In addition, the number of “Emergency Substitute Certificates” that OSPI is projected to issue this school year is more than five times higher than in the 2011–12 school year. 80 percent of principals had employed individuals with emergency teaching certificates as classroom teachers, or individuals with emergency substitute certificates as long-term substitutes.

The teacher and substitute shortage is being experienced in all regions and types of schools. However, it is especially problematic in lower-income schools and the central region of the state.

**Possible Solutions:** The 2016 Legislature knows they need to take action this session to address these issues. The House and Senate have bills before them that begin taking immediate and longer term, more systemic steps toward addressing these challenges. Several bills are in play related to alleviating the substitute shortage, increasing alternative route programs, increasing beginning teacher compensation and mentoring, and offering more comprehensive, long-term strategies. These include proposals to:

- Increase the starting salary of beginning teachers and provide incentives to new teachers for working in high needs schools;
- Allow recently retired teachers to substitute;
- Recruit teachers from in-state and nationwide; and support high schools to encourage teaching as a profession;

- Streamline the process for experienced out-of-state teachers to work in Washington; and
- Make it easier for teachers to apply for jobs.

<b>2016 Teacher/Substitute Bills</b>			
<b>Comprehensive Solutions - includes all items listed above (OSPI request)</b>	<b>Beginning Teacher Supports (Governor request)</b>	<b>Substitute Teacher Shortage</b>	<b>Professional Certification / Alternative Routes</b>
<b>HB 2573/SB 6332</b>	<b>SB 6241/HB 2472</b>	<b>SHB 1737</b>	<b>HB 2383 SB 6455</b>

In addition to achieving the vision for students articulated in the State’s Basic Education Act Goals, success in the investment in full-day kindergarten, K–3 class size reduction, and other “*McCleary*/Basic Education” components depends on making significant changes in Washington’s ability to recruit and retain quality teachers.

As you visit with your policy makers, some things that you might consider sharing stories about include:

- Current district hiring challenges
  - Has your district been able to hire fully certificated teachers for all of you positions?
  - What areas have been the most challenging?
  - Have you had difficulty hiring substitutes?
- Impact of teacher/substitute shortage on students
  - What specific short and long term actions do you think will help relieve the shortages?

## **Science Assessment Graduation Requirement**

This time last year, high schools across the state were up in arms about the number of students (over 2,000 by some counts) who might not graduate as a result of not meeting standard on the high school End-of-Course Biology exam. As a result several pieces of legislation were introduced and the State Board of Education mobilized their voice to make strong recommendations to policy makers to “de-link” the high school Biology End of Course exam as a graduation requirement. While, a high school science assessment is still required as part of federal accountability, various proposals were introduced to eliminate the test as a graduation requirement until a comprehensive science assessment based on our state’s 2013 Science Learning Standards (the Next Generation Science Standards) took hold, but did not move forward. These included companion bills HB 1950 and SB 5825 and HB 2214 that addressed the breadth of assessment graduation requirements.

This session, E2SHB 2214 has been passed out of the House and there are other bills under consideration that specifically address the Biology End of Course assessment requirement (HB 2556 and HB 2734). WASA/WSSDA/WASBO agree that something needs to be done this session to eliminate the current Biology End of Course exam as a graduation requirement for the Class of 2017. In order to allow for the smooth transition to the 2013 Science Learning Standards for teachers and students, and until a comprehensive high school assessment is developed based on those standards, it is important to release this pressure valve for students and teachers across the state.