



Washington State  
School Directors' Association

# Legislative Update

April 30, 2015

By [Deb Merle](#)

## Springtime in Olympia

The Legislature adjourned the 2015 “regular” session two days early, on April 24<sup>th</sup>. Governor Inslee called them back into “special” session to finish their work beginning April 29<sup>th</sup>. Special sessions can last for up to 30 days and additional special sessions may be called if needed. Let’s hope that isn’t the case this year.

- Both houses have passed operating budgets. The final deal is under negotiation.
- The capital budget passed both chambers and is on the House concurrence calendar.
- Both houses have passed transportation budgets. The final deal is under negotiation.

The House and Senate operating budgets each fund MSOC, all-day Kindergarten, and K-3 classes of 17. They also both assume major changes to I-1351, cutting implementation costs by billions of dollars. Bills spelling out these and other policy changes assumed in the budgets are on the agenda for special session.

The state’s 2015 fiscal year ends June 30<sup>th</sup>; a balanced operating budget for 2015-17 must be signed by midnight, or state government shuts down the next day.

## *Compensation and Levy Reform*

Between them, the House and Senate have five bills and one proposal related to compensation and levy reform. Our [Bill Watch List](#) provides summaries of the bills; Representative Hunter’s summary of his proposal can be found [here](#).

## **Springtime in the other Washington**

A bipartisan agreement crafted by Senators Alexander and Murray to reauthorize the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA) was amended and passed by the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions in mid-April.

Sarah Bolton, Senator Murray's senior staff person for ESEA reauthorization, spoke with WSSDA, WASA and AWSP members and directors this week. She reviewed elements of the [Senate's proposal compared to existing NCLB regulations](#), and discussed next steps in the Senate. A floor vote is expected in early June; Senators Murray and Alexander hope to hold off any deal-breaker amendments (e.g., vouchers) that are offered.

Representative Kline, chair of the House Education and the Workforce committee, has not yet commented about next steps in the House. Hopefully, a strong bipartisan vote in the Senate will spur action in the House. Please contact Representative McMorris-Rodgers and your local Representative. Let them know you support ESEA reauthorization this year and ask them to move the bill in the House.

## **Springtime in your neck of the woods**

Special session is a great time to visit with legislators *on your own turf*. A few of them spend a lot of time in Olympia laying the groundwork for the final budget. However, most of them come to town only for meetings about bills related to the budget, and eventually to cast budget votes.

But, they will be communicating with their colleagues as negotiations proceed. Spending time with them while they are "in district" to reinforce WSSDA's priorities and to help them understand how various bills and plans impact your district, will bear fruit.

- Meet them for a cup of coffee
- Set up an appointment at their district office
- Invite them to a school event with parents in attendance, or to an end-of-year celebration, like field day, where they can spend time with students
- Ask them speak at graduation ceremonies

Have fun next week!

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