



Washington State
School Directors' Association

Legislative Update

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By [Deb Merle](#)

There's no deal 'til there's a whole deal

"End game" budget negotiations are always messy, this year is no exception. One day there seems to be a breakthrough, the next day they're calling each other names. But, legislative leaders and the governor are still meeting every day and they have a couple of weeks left to put together a go-home budget before parts of state government shut down on July 1st. To repeat last week's non-prediction: A deal could come next week, but don't hold your breath until then. In the meantime, I'm going to review the definition of "essential" in the state employee handbook.

Compensation and levy reform stay on the front burner

This week, the Senate Ways and Means committee heard a new bipartisan bill that redefines Basic Education, resolves compensation issues and reforms levy policy – unless the funding doesn't come through, then...nevermind. To paraphrase Senator Hargrove, one of the bill sponsors, the choices offered in [Senate Bill 6130](#) and [House Bill 2239](#) are: a plan with no funding or direction to develop a plan and recommend funding.

All signs point to a work group for some or all of the issues related to compensation and levy reform. Will an interim work group with final decisions made about all of this next legislative session satisfy, or at least mollify, the court? That's the cliff hanger.

Test talk

During the first special session, the House passed [2ESHB 2214](#) with strong bipartisan support (87-7). The bill delinks standardized test results from high school graduation requirements, reduces the number of tests during high school from six to three, requires senior-year courses for students who score a 1 or 2 the SBACs, and eliminates Collections of Evidence (which would save the state about \$30 million).

The Senate Education committee did not hear the bill and it reverted to the House Rules committee at the beginning of the second special session. This week the House passed the bill again with similar margins and sent it back to the Senate. Proponents continue to hope this bill is part of the final budget discussions underway.

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