

Legislative Update

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Special Session Week 3 and Final Update:

The Petals Have Fallen

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Weekly Reflections

I wondered this week about the real truth to the Sine Die Tree's falling blooms. As if on cue, they began dropping this week, nudging our legislators out of their closed door negotiations. Rumors were fast and furious over the weekend of a final sine die by at least this Thursday. Those of you in attendance at the WSSDA Regional Meetings (Stanwood, Federal Way, Pullman, and Deer Park) know that we were all scrambling when the Senate was back in town Monday, the House on Tuesday, and when the final gavel landed around 11pm on Tuesday night.



The week was full of [bill signings](#) and legislators celebrating the fruits of their labor. Governor Inslee took action late in the week by [issuing a letter](#) and not signing the Charter School bill ([SB 6194](#)) which was a point of contention throughout. Even without his signature it will become law. Other bills that WSSDA was holding our breath on included:

- **Levy Cliff** bills ([HB 2698](#) or [SB 6353](#)) that would have extended current levy policy for at least one more year to allow for the Legislature to address basic education obligations (especially teacher compensation). While neither bill passed, a budget proviso was included in the final supplemental budget that basically puts the 2017 legislature on the hook to deal with both of these items by April 30, 2017. Check out [2ESHB 2376, Section 515](#) for the exact wording.
- **Teacher/Substitute Shortage** ([SB 6455](#)) providing several short and medium-term policy actions intended to help alleviate teacher shortage issues. The bill was signed in its entirety as it passed the legislature.

- **Truancy Reform** ([HB 2449](#)) requiring districts to create community truancy boards within existing resources in collaboration with local juvenile courts and utilizing LAP dollars. While we requested a partial veto of those two sections, the Governor kept in the community truancy board and training requirements but removed the linkage to the Learning Assistance Program. [Here](#) is his partial veto letter.

Disappointment abounded across the K-12 community this week when the final 2016 Supplemental Operating Budget ([2ESHB 2376](#)) only took baby steps toward addressing the teacher shortage; and the attempt to “address” levy cliff concerns landed like one of the wilting leaves from the sine die tree (only less gracefully). Investments were more optimistic in the Supplemental Capital Budget ([ESHB 2380](#)), with approximately \$70 million in additional enhancements to K-12 capital efforts. [Click here for WSSDA’s summary of both final budgets as they passed the Legislature on March 29th](#). In addition, check out WASA’s [TWIO, Final Budget Edition](#) (3/29/16) for the inside scoop on budget maneuvers and the levy cliff (pages one and two).

Overall in this “short” session, over 2,000 bills were introduced but only 270 passing out of both chambers and making their way to the Governor’s desk. While WSSDA followed 117 bills throughout the session, only 22 made their way to the Governor.

This week reminded me about the patience and perseverance we all must have in our daily professional work, and our work at home in our gardens. More often than not, I find that I plant more seeds than ever show their faces to the sun, and when we eagerly await fresh green grass from recent re-seeding efforts, there are always the inevitable empty patches. And that azalea that we planted two years ago...it has yet to bud! This work takes patience and perseverance. While I sometimes feel frustrated and helpless when I don’t know how to deal with the pH in the soil, I simply cannot find the heart to pull out that dang azalea. Somehow, I find the hope to push on and get back to the drawing board now, in hopes of experiencing her bright blooms next year.

2016 Regular Session Wrap-up Details

This week the Governor signed most of the final policy bills on his desk remaining from the Regular Session. He now has 20 days (not including Sundays) from the close of the Special Session to sign the remaining bills, including the Supplemental Budgets. For a detailed recount of the bills we tracked this session of interest to WSSDA members, check out the two WSSDA Bill Watch lists and past weekly Legislative Updates available on our [Legislative Update Web page](#).

Look for a final 2016 Session Wrap-Up communications package (including final and updated Bill Watch Lists) by the end of April!

So, as many of you exodus for spring break, or hunker down in your yards as I’ll be doing this coming week, when you return, join fellow WSSDA members across the state in preparing for [WSSDA’s Legislative Assembly](#) September 23 and 24 in Spokane. This is a critical process that starts with the proposal submission window opening on or before April 15th.

Finally, as the final petals fall from the Sine Die Tree this week, I’d love your input on WSSDA’s communications during the 2016 session:

- What worked?
- What can be improved?
- What would you like to see included in a package of Session Wrap-Up materials for you to share

Please [email me directly](#) with anything you'd like to share.

This work requires a year-round commitment. While we do need a break to enjoy the sun and rejuvenate, I invite each of you to join me later this month in rolling up our sleeves. Let's build plans for the interim that will bring WSSDA's 1,477 school directors and our education partners together with a constructive voice to support our legislators to make the right decisions for our state's 1.1 million students this time next year. Thank you for all you have done and are doing!

Stay Connected!

- Get ready for [WSSDA's 2016 Legislative Assembly](#)!
- [WSSDA Legislative Updates](#) (includes weekly Bill Watch Lists)
- [WSSDA Legislative Session Resources](#): includes links to communications documents to assist school directors in sharing information about WSSDA's legislative priorities and other hot topics
- [Fiscal.wa.gov](#) provides easy-to-access interactive budgets along with agency summary documents and spreadsheets
- [This Week in Olympia](#): Dan Steele's weekly updates to WASA members include good information that is relevant to many topics that WSSDA members also care about.
- [AWSP's Weekly Legislative Updates](#): If you are interested in seeing legislative issues through the eyes of school principals, Jerry's updates will provide you the insight you need!

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