



This Week in Olympia

Washington Association of School Administrators

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The regular session of the 61st Washington State Legislature was scheduled to adjourn on April 26. They did adjourn about 1:00 A.M. on Monday, April 27. The question now is — will they be called back for a special session — and if so, when and for how long?

Special Edition: Sine Die?

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- The 61st Legislature Adjourns — Will they be called back?
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SINE DIE

The sixty-first Washington State Legislature adjourned Sine Die shortly before 1:00 A.M. on Monday, April 27. The biennial state operating (ESHB 1244), transportation (ESSB 5352), and capital (ESHB 1216) budgets have all been passed but both Governor Gregoire and Senate Majority Leader Lisa Brown are conferring with legislative leadership to decide if the legislature will be called back “to take care of a handful of bills necessary to implement the budget.” The Governor said in her press conference on Monday that she wants to bring them back for a few days with a very specific agenda that has agreement before they came back. She wants them to go home and reconnect with their families and come back some time in the next few weeks. She can call them back for thirty days and she can request agreement on the agenda and length, but the legislature has the final say on what will happen if they are called back. Read Governor Gregoire’s letter to Washingtonians [HERE](#).

View Budget Bills and Documents [HERE](#)

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

One of those bills is [ESHB 1776](#), Engrossed Striker, the Levy Lid/Levy Equalization bill. Passed by the Senate on Saturday, April 25, the bill would: change the sunset clause from 2011 to 2014 for the provision which allows districts to calculate their levy base using the I-728 and I-732 amounts they were supposed to get before budget reductions; increase levy lids for all districts by 4% (but not to exceed 35%) for levies passed in 2009 through 2011. Note: the Senate also passed SB 6138 which corrects this drafting error and permits the 4% lid increase for levies already passed; permits districts with voter approved M&O levies ‘to seek an additional approval from the voters if subsequently enacted legislation would permit a higher levy’; and, from January 1, 2010 through December 31, 2011, levy equalization allocations and maximum eligibility may be reduced as determined in the 2009-2011 operating budget. NOTE: This last provision is included in ESHB 1776 because current language states that “beginning in 2007 allocations and maximum eligibility (for levy equalization) shall be fully funded at one hundred percent and shall not be reduced.”

Late on Sunday the House debated the bill for over two hours, with mostly

2009 SESSION REPORT

As soon as possible after everything is final, WASA's Session Report will be made available on our website and mailed to WASA members. We'll let you know when it is available via TWIO.

Republicans opposing the bill because it would exacerbate the over-reliance on levies and the gap between districts by allowing property-rich districts the opportunity to get more money for teacher salaries and programs for students, while property-poor districts—some even adjoining those districts—would continue to have to do without because the state once again walked away from its responsibility to fully fund basic education and levy equalization. Those speaking in favor of the bill said that because of the unprecedented financial crisis we are facing, districts must be allowed to have every possible revenue tool they can use.

The Speaker suddenly called a halt to the debate, tabled the bill, and declared the House “at ease.” The bill was not brought back up. At this point, it is unclear as to what—if any—impact that has on the 2009-2011 K-12 budget that did pass. OSPI is reviewing this and the Governor said in her press conference that she is willing to look at the link between the 4% lid lift and levy equalization if they are called back. What is clear is that ESHB 1776 (and SB 6138) or similar legislation must pass the House for the 4% levy lid increase (which includes the rollback) to go into effect. The budget that passed is the one we have to work with now. See last Friday's TWIO ([TWIO 4-24](#)).

OSPI plans to have pivot tables ready prior to the April 30 2:30-4:30 videoconference. [PIVOT TABLES](#) can be viewed here when complete. (Check the site periodically.)

LEVY LID/LEVY EQUALIZATION - BACKGROUND and HISTORY

WASA's standing position is that any lift in the levy lid must be accompanied by a commensurate increase in levy equalization. As legislators continue to fight this out behind closed doors, you should contact your legislators to let them know what financial dilemmas you are preparing for so they have that information if they do come back to town and revisit ESHB 1776.

For your information, we have prepared a series of links to documents about levy lids, levy equalization and WASA's position.

1937 - Article from [The Bellevue American](#) newspaper January, 1937, “[Equalization Fund Plan for Schools is Discussed.](#)”

1990 - [WASA Position Paper: Levy Equalization](#)

1996 - [WASA's Education First! Coalition](#)

1997 - [WASA Position Paper - Levy Lid/LEA](#)

1997 - Article in the [Seattle Times](#), “[Schools see millions in cuts if state lowers levy limit.](#)”

1999 - [WASA's Recommendations to the 1999 Legislature](#)

2002 - [WASA's Legislative Session Report: Levy Equalization Study](#)

2009 - [Levy Lid and Levy Equalization - Organization and Financing of Washington Public Schools, OSPI](#)

BILLS THAT PASSED THE LEGISLATURE

The bills in the link above have been sent to the Governor. She has “veto” power over all or any section of a bill. The Governor has 5 days, excluding Sundays, to take action on any bill passed by the legislature, provided adjournment does not occur within those 5 days, in which case the Governor has 20 days to take action, excluding Sundays. If the Governor does not sign a bill in the time allotted, it becomes law automatically.

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