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This Sine Die special edition is the last TWIO of the 2013 Regular Session. A special edition TWIO will be released following the end of the Special Session. TWIO is posted on WASA's website at www.wasa-oly.org/TWIO.

NOTE: WASA staff is currently preparing our annual End of Session report. It will contain full details of the 2013 Operating Budget and the 2013 Capital Budget, along with a comprehensive review of the many education-related bills the Legislature addressed this session. It will be emailed to all TWIO subscribers as soon as it is completed.

Special Edition: Sine Die

The 2013 Legislature is done...for now. As anticipated, legislators met through the maximum 105 days allotted for this session and adjourned with major unfinished business. After a weekend of “work” (work is loosely defined), the first session of the 63rd Legislature adjourned “*Sine Die*” at about 6:15 p.m. Sunday night. Shortly after, Governor Jay Inslee held the traditional post-session press conference and announced that he would be calling the Legislature back to town for a Special Session beginning May 13. Special Sessions are limited to 30 days, although the Legislature may adjourn anytime before that deadline. Additional 30-day sessions may also be called if necessary. In calling a Special Session, a governor cannot limit the time legislators meet, nor can they limit or direct the business the Legislature deals with. Of course, those rules never keep a governor from trying.

In calling for a Special Session, Inslee stated that he expected the Legislature to accomplish three specific things:

- 1. Adopt a 2013–15 Operating Budget.** Inslee noted that budget-writers in the House and Senate were “not miles apart” in coming to a final compromise on the budget—they were “light-years apart.”
- 2. Adopt a 2013–15 Transportation Budget.** It should be noted that the House and Senate actually did adopt a 2013–15 Transportation Budget earlier in the day; however, it was a “bare-bones” budget with no new revenue. Inslee and key legislators seek a broader Transportation Budget to fund the Columbia River Crossing, the Spokane North-South highway, Highway 167 and other major projects. Those additional major projects will take additional revenue which will have to be funded through an increase in the gas tax or some other mechanism.
- 3. Adopt “education accountability measures.”** While Inslee did not specifically clarify which issues he wanted the Legislature to address, it is fairly clear from comments in previous weeks that he is at least referencing legislation regarding letter-grading (A–F) for schools and third grade reading intervention.

Inslee’s **Special Session proclamation** specifically references the 2013–15 Operating and Transportation Budgets. The official proclamation does not discuss the education issues Inslee wants to be addressed, but it states “work remains to be done with respect to critical policy bills that need to be acted upon by the Legislature.” During his press conference, Inslee made clear that, in addition to the two budgets and education matters, he wanted the

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continued

Legislature to adopt: “commonsense” gun control; the Reproductive Parity Act (abortion insurance); the Washington State DREAM Act (higher education financial aid assistance for undocumented students); and aggressive DUI penalties.

Legislative caucus leadership have not issued any official list of issues they believe have to be addressed during the Special Session; however, Senator Steve Litzow (R-Mercer Island), Chair of the Senate Early Learning & K–12 Education Committee, addressed the ongoing education priorities of the Senate Majority Coalition Caucus. In talking about the budget, he stated that “new dollars for education must be tied to new accountability measures,” and specifically mentioned A–F grading of schools, third grade reading accountability and providing additional authority to principals to hire and assign staff (that is, “mutual consent” legislation).

Advocacy Activities

School administrators have an excellent opportunity, while there is a break in the action, to contact legislators. You can continue to call, write or e-mail your policymakers; however, you are encouraged to take the time to try and meet with them while they are at home. Without the crush of the day-to-day activities in Olympia, legislators may be able to give you more attention than three minutes in passing. As you begin to develop budgets, let legislators know what your district is facing, especially if they do not complete a state budget anytime soon. What impact will that have on your district and your decision-making? Additionally, the expected “significant” basic education down payment to comply with the *McCleary* decision is far from a done deal. The proposals currently on the table leave a bit to be desired, but there will be heavy pressure to further reduce that down payment amount. Without additional revenue, legislators are going to be faced with extremely difficult decisions—and we fear that K–12 could once again be sacrificed if we do not step up and apply some pressure.

WASA will provide periodic information on legislative progress after the Special Session begins. We will also remind you to continue to be involved in the legislative process. Together, we CAN make a difference!



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