



WASA NEWS

September 2015

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Mark Your Calendars!

- Washington Educators' Conference, October 25–26, 2015, Marriott Hotel, Bellevue
- WASA/WSSDA/WASBO Legislative Conference, January 31–February 1, 2016, New Location—South Puget Sound Community College/Capitol Campus, Olympia
- WASA Small Schools Conference, March 14–15, 2016, New Location—Wenatchee Convention Center, Wenatchee

Legislative Report

- Following the record-long, 176 day 2015 Legislative Session, WASA compiled our annual *End of Session Report*. The report contains complete details of the 2015–17 Operating Budget and the 2015–17 Capital Construction Budget, along with a comprehensive review of the many education-related legislation address this year. The second year of the 64th Biennial Legislature begins in January and many of the same issues will be rehashed again. Reviewing the *End of Session Report* will provide you with some insights about upcoming issues in 2016. The report was emailed to all TWIO subscribers and is archived on the WASA website at: <http://bit.ly/1JvWepV>.
- The 2015 Legislature met under the cloud of a contempt order from the Supreme Court issued last September in the ongoing *McCleary v. State* education funding case. In 2012 and 2014, the Court ordered the Legislature to adopt “a complete plan for fully implementing its program of basic education for each school year between now and the 2017–18 school year.” After the Legislature failed to comply, the Court held the Legislature in contempt of court; however, they accepting the Legislature’s promise to comply in 2015 and delayed issuing any sanctions. Although the 2015 Legislature provided a significant increase in K–12 funding in the new two-year budget, they were unable to adopt the ordered plan. Following the submission of required briefs from the State and the *McCleary* plaintiffs (Network for Excellence in Washington Schools or NEWS), the Court found the contempt order had not been purged and issued sanctions. The Court issued a “remedial penalty” of \$100,000 per day fine (beginning August 13) until the Legislature adopts the required plan; the fine must be placed in a segregated account dedicated to basic education. The Court encouraged Governor Inslee to call a Special Session to address the matter and agreed to vacate any penalties if a plan was adopted during the Special Session. Inslee has met with legislative leaders, but it appears unlikely a plan will be crafted before the next Regular Session and, therefore, calling a Special Session seems unlikely.
- One of the major issues the 2015 Legislature failed to address was the continuing unconstitutional underfunding of educator compensation—which is forcing the ongoing unconstitutional overreliance on local levies. Several compensation/levy reform proposals were introduced late in the session; however, none were ever acted upon. This will probably be THE major education issue in the 2016 Session. The WASBO/WASA Local Funding Workgroup has been reactivated and is reviewing the current proposals on the table and discussing next steps to best influence the process. The Workgroup will be developing talking points to assist school leaders in discussing the issue—and administrators are encouraged to be actively engaged in the conversation—as any adopted legislation will likely have major implications for all school districts. You can review the Workgroup’s “whitepaper” issued earlier this year at: <http://bit.ly/1NFAqK8>.
- This fall, the Senate Early Learning & K–12 Education Committee will be conducting a statewide “listening tour” designed to “hear directly from parents, teachers, taxpayers, community

members, and others about their concerns and ideas for meeting the state's constitutional mandate to fund education without reliance on local levies." A major focus of the meetings will be the compensation/levy reform proposals issued this past session. The meetings will be held at ESDs across the state and administrators are strongly encouraged to participate. Additional details on dates and locations will be provided as soon as the schedule is released.

Other WASA News

- Please be aware of a recent court case which clarified the Washington Public Records Act (PRA) and may have implications for your school district and employees. In *Nissen v. Pierce County*, the Supreme Court held that text messages sent and received by a public employee are subject to disclosure under the PRA, even if the employee uses a private cell phone. Failing to appropriately handle the disclosure of public records, including records that were created on employees' private devices, could lead to expensive litigation. If questions arise, you are strongly advised to contact your attorney.
- WASA members elected Lois Davies, superintendent of Pateros School District, WASA President-elect 2015-16.
- The Superintendent of the Year program is currently underway. Applications for Washington's Superintendent of the Year are due October 1, 2015. For more information, visit the AASA website at <http://soy.aasa.org/> or contact Marilee Jensen at mjensen@wasa-oly.org or 360.943.5717.
- Don't forget to schedule Focus on Education events to showcase the great learning taking place in your schools. November is the kickoff, but districts are encouraged to schedule events anytime during the year.
- Slice of Washington—WASA would like to showcase your district's innovative programs and success stories in *Hotline* and on the WASA website. Please send information, pictures, materials, etc., to Tricia McCosh at pmccosh@wasa-oly.org.

AASA News

- AASA National Conference on Education, February 11-13, 2016, Phoenix Convention Center, Phoenix, Arizona. Registration is now open at <http://nce.aasa.org/>.