



Association of Educational Service Districts

Supporting Educational Communities in Washington State

Educational Service Districts

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Association of Educational Service Districts
2008 Legislative Agenda
Session Summary

The just completed 2008 legislative session was a supplemental session. Supplemental sessions have the purpose of making adjustments to the budgets passed during the previous full session thereby completing the biennial budgets.

Legislative action was somewhat constrained by the upcoming general elections. Governor Gregoire made it clear at the outset that she would approve no new programs. As will become apparent later in this report, this intent led to the Governor's veto of a legislatively approved expansion of ESD capacities.

While the Washington State economic situation is better than most other states, there remains concern for expanded budget deficits for the 2010 - 2012 biennium. This caution led to expansion of the state's "rainy day" reserve fund and reduction in funds available for program expansion.

For the ESDs, the most significant development during the session was the expanded recognition and interest by the Governor's staff, legislative members, and legislative staff of the potential for ESD regional delivery of services to school districts. This recognition coincides nicely with ESD Superintendents' efforts to frame an ESD system for the purpose of more effective regional delivery of services. These developments coincide to present a unique opportunity for AESD this upcoming session.

AESD Legislative Priorities:

Our AESD Legislative Priorities with an assessment of what happened during the session is attached. Outcomes are summarized below:

1. Core Funding – ESD Staff Allocation Formula: Develop and promote a budget request to define an adequately funded staff allocation formula for the FTEs allocated to the ESDs in the 2007 legislative session. The intent is to adequately fund existing allocations as was done for the math specialists.

Increased General Fund Request

Fiscal Year 2009	\$2,779,740
Biennial Amount	\$5,480,416

Session Outcome: Significant progress was made approaching this issue from the perspective of forming an ESD Regional Delivery System. There is widespread support in both the legislature and the Governor's Office for the critical role a statewide ESD system can play in support of our schools. The Governor vetoed those portions of Bill 6673 which would have provided about \$1.5 million to fund reading specialists and community outreach positions in the ESD.

Administration Office
221 College Street NE
Olympia, WA 98516
360.252.3018
Fax 360.493.9247
www.aesd-wa.org

Legislative Information
Contacts
Jim Shoemake - WASA
ishoe@harbornet.com

Tom Kelly - WASA
t_k2007@comcast.net

825 5th Street SE
Olympia, WA 98501
360.943.5717
Fax 360.352.2043

2. Fiscal Technical Assistance: Develop and promote a plan for additional resources and an expanded role for ESDs to provide proactive fiscal assistance to school districts. This would define the capacity within core funding for provision of assistance to districts in maintaining strong fiscal positions.

Increased General Fund Request

Fiscal Year 2009	\$1,322,979
Biennial Amount	\$2,604,913

Session Outcome: Active discussion with the Governor's staff and legislative staff did not result in a legislative proposal. It is very important to cast this proposal as technical assistance not monitoring as was done in the 2007 session. While there is significant recognition that such assistance will be required to assist school districts meet increasingly difficult fiscal conditions, no action was possible during this supplemental session.

3. Dropout Prevention/Intervention: Develop and promote a plan for a regional based system for dropout prevention and intervention operated by each ESD in collaboration with local school districts. A component of this proposal will address ESDs awarding high school graduation credits for dropout retrieval programs with the approval of the school districts within their region.

No Funding Requested

Session Outcome: Consideration of a regional based system for dropout prevention and intervention operated by each ESD in collaboration with local school districts is ongoing in the Building Bridges program. Building Bridges is a two-year pilot program which was enacted by the legislature during the 2007 session. ESDs are represented on the Building Bridges Steering Committee (Tom Kelly) and on the Partnership Sub-Committee (Walt Bigby; Mick Moore, PSESD). Discussion in the 2008 Session did not result in legislative action.

4. Capital Funding Study: Cause action to be taken to fund a study which would consider public funding for ESD facilities. This action follows comments in the Performance Audit.

Increased Capital Fund Request

Fiscal Year 2009	\$150,000
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Session Outcome: This request was included in the OSPI budget request but did not receive favorable action during the session.

5. Statutory Change Certification Fee: Seek change to RCW 28A.410.060 language to allow a portion of certification fees to cover expenses of operating ESD certification offices. The PESB endorsed the requested change at their November 7, 2007 meeting.

No Funding Requested

Session Outcome: Bill 6740 Regarding the Provision of Teacher Certification Services was passed and signed into law. This will allow the ESD portion of certification fees to offset the cost of operating certification offices. This should total about \$250,000 per year in new revenue to cover existing costs.

Other Legislation of Interest:

Also attached is the final bill watch which presents the bills having impact on ESDs that we closely followed and worked. Of the nineteen bills that we followed, four became law. ESD impacts of enacted legislation are:

Senate Bill 2635, Regarding School District Boundaries and Organization: Establishes a process which retains ESDs in a key role with local districts in dispute. This responds to an issue raised by the performance audit. A significant change causes the ESD Boards to appoint members to the Regional Committee. Previously, members were elected by school directors in the ESD region.

Senate Bill 6673, Creating Learning Opportunities: As passed by the Legislature, the bill included \$867 K to fund reading specialists in ESDs and an additional \$592 K to fund outreach specialists in the ESDs. The Governor vetoed these provisions based largely upon her commitment not to fund new programs.

Senate Bill 6740, Regarding the Provision of Teacher Certification Services: As discussed above, permits the use of a portion of certification fees to fund ESD certification offices.

Senate Bill 6743, Regarding Training and Guidelines for Teachers of Students with Autism: Does not include any provisions specific to ESDs.

At the outset of the session, we were advised that we would be fortunate to preserve our existing ESD funding. In fact, we did preserve our funding base and realized a modest expansion of funding. Good working relationships have been established with the Governor's office, key legislative members, legislative staff, and OSPI. Active discussions of ESD Regional Delivery supported by an ESD system present an opportunity during the upcoming session.