

Legislative Glossary

A+ (Academic Achievement and Accountability Commission): Legislatively created body to provide oversight of the state's K-12 education accountability system

Achievement Gap: Differences in academic performance among groups; often identifies racially, ethnically, and by income levels.

Act: A bill adopted by the Legislature

AYP (Adequate Yearly Progress): The minimum level of improvement that states, school districts, and schools must achieve each year.

Basic Education Act: In response to a lawsuit initiated in 1976 by Seattle School District, State Superior Court Judge Doran directed the state legislature to define and fully fund a program of basic education for all students in Washington. In the following legislative session, the Legislature adopted the Basic Education Act of 1977. The court case and this landmark law redefined the state role and continue to shape the school funding policy in Washington.

Benchmark: A detailed description of a specific level of student achievement expected of students at particular ages, grades, or developmental levels

Bicameral: Composed of two chambers or two legislative bodies. The Washington State bicameral legislature is made up of a House of Representatives and a Senate.

Biennium: Two-year period. The Washington State fiscal biennium is from July 1 of odd numbered years to June 30, two years later.

Bill: A proposed law presented to the Legislature for consideration

Bond: Funds raised by a school district for construction and related activities for school facilities.

Capital Budget: Appropriations made to state and local agencies for building construction projects

Caucus: A formal meeting of members of a group to discuss and strategize about an issue

Conference Committee: A committee appointed to discuss specific differences of opinion between the House and the Senate on bills which have passed each house but with differing positions on one or more amendments

Doran Decisions: First decision (1977) found that state funding for education was insufficient for funding a basic education. It required 180 days per year, a minimum instruction time, and certificated staff/student ratios. The second decision (1983) included categorical programs (special education, remediation or LAP, bilingual education, and pupil transportation.

ESEA (Elementary and Secondary Education Act): Primary federal law affecting K-12 education and reauthorized by Congress every six years

Federal Impact Aid: After the Second World War, Congress realized that local districts' ability to generate revenue from property taxes for support of public schools is often severely reduced by federal acquisition of property, such as federal Indian reservation and military reservations. Such property is nontaxable. This issue was resolved by what is now known as Title VIII of the ESEA Act, School Assistance in Federally Affected Areas for Maintenance and Operation.

Focused Assistance to Schools: Funds were appropriated to OSPI in the Education Reform Act, HB 1290, requiring the establishment of educational audits of low-performing schools. The school would then enter into a performance agreement with OSPI to implement the recommendations of the audit. Educational audits would include recommendations for best practices and ways to address the identified needs.

FTE – Full Time Equivalent

Grandfathered: Accepted as it was prior to a law implementing changes

IDEA (Individual with Disabilities Education Act): Federal law that specifies requirements for educating students with disabilities

LAP: Learning Assistance Program.

LEV (League of Education Voters): A non-profit, grassroots statewide network of public school advocates

Levy Base: A percentage of what the district receives from state and some federal funding

Levy Equalization: State provides some additional funds to help areas with low property values which are designed to equalize property poor

and property rich districts. Also known as local effort assistance (LEA)

Levy Lid: A cap on the amount a school district is allowed to raise based on a percentage of a district's levy base

Local Levy: A tax passed by voters to raise funds locally. School districts raise funds through a property tax to support programs beyond what the State funds for basic education. These monies provide operating funds for maintenance and operations, equipment purchases, and transportation.

NCLB (No Child Left Behind): The new name for the ESEA Act reauthorized in January 2002

Operating Budget: Two year plan of funding ongoing activities of state agencies, except transportation

OSPI: Oversees public instruction in Washington and led by State Superintendent of Public Instruction Dr. Terry Bergeson

Referendum: Recently passed legislation referred by the Legislature to the voters for their rejection or enactment

Regular Apportionment: Funding defined as basic education outside of categorical programs

Revised Code of Washington (RCW): Codification (listing) of current statutes as enacted and amended

School Improvement Process: Schools that have not made adequate yearly progress must undergo a process of improvement that can include improvement plans, technical assistance, school choice, new staff and/or curriculum, supplemental services, and complete restructuring depending on how long the school has not met progress goals.

Session: Official meeting of the Legislature. The Constitution provides for one 105-day regular session during odd-numbered years and one 60-day session during even-numbered years

Special Session: A session of not more than 30 days, convened by the Governor or the

Legislature following adjournment of the regular session

Supplemental Budget: Changes in the second year of the biennium to funds allocated in the original capital, operating, or transportation budget

Third Reading: The final consideration of a bill before either house; the bill can be debated, tabled, referred, but not amended. Final passage takes a constitutional majority (25 in the Senate and 50 in the house).

Title I: The nation's largest federal education program (Part one of the ESEA) providing remedial education programs to poor and disadvantaged children

WASA (Washington Association of School Administrators): A professional association representing education administrators in Washington State

Washington Administrative Code (WAC): Code stating how agencies shall organize and adopt rules and regulations

Washington State Board of Education: Board responsible for overseeing the implementation of laws enacted by the legislature. The Board's primary policy areas presently are: educator preparation and certification requirements, state minimum high school graduation requirements, school construction funding, private school approval, school accreditation, school district approval, and election of Educational Service District boards.

WEA (Washington Education Association): A professional association representing public school, college, and other education employees

WSSDA (Washington State School Directors' Association): A professional association representing the state's locally elected school board members