

Capitol News Special Session Report

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Melissa Johnson, WSLHA Lobbyist

The Legislature is poised to enter its third special session next week, with not much to show for the first two special sessions. Lawmakers will be back in Olympia on June 22nd to (hopefully) reach agreements on K-12 funding and the state two-year operating budget. Unlike Congress, our Legislature does not have the option of a continuing resolution that would allow a month-to-month state budget to be enacted until resolving the budget impasse. A budget must pass by June 30th to avoid a partial government shutdown.

Lawmakers will be watching the release of the state revenue forecast on Tuesday. This forecast will determine whether budget negotiators have additional revenue, or whether they will have to reduce spending for the upcoming biennium. Unfortunately, expectations are that the revenue forecast will be down.

If history is any indication, legislators will come to an agreement in time. In both 2013 and 2015, legislators passed a budget in the wee hours of June 30th, thus avoiding a shutdown. However, in those years, legislators had made much more negotiating progress leading up to the third special session. This year, with negotiators at a seeming impasse, it's difficult to see how they approve a budget in time.

Unlike the negotiations on the overall operating budget, the legislators negotiating the K-12 budget/McCleary solution have been hard at work during the first two special sessions. Reports are that they are close to an agreement on many issues. However, the school financing formula continues to be a difficult issue to resolve.

These negotiators are also still debating the salary allocation model topic, which affects our years of service issue for our school-based physical therapists. The question is whether the state should continue to have a salary schedule for school personnel, and if so, what should it look like? WSLHA, along with our partners (PTWA, WOTA, SNOW, WEA) continue to advocate that yes, the salary schedule should be maintained and should be changed to allow up to 15 years credit.

This Week's Events

Health Care & Wellness (House) - HHR A, JLOB - 6/19 @ 1:00pm

- HB 2222 - Public Hearing - Protecting information obtained to develop or implement an individual health insurance market stability program.
- HB 2222 - Exec Session - Protecting information obtained to develop or implement an individual health insurance market stability program.
- Work session - Access to health insurance in the individual market.

