



Sequestration

What is sequestration?

The word “sequestration” means to set aside or separate. In this discussion, sequestration refers to a series of across-the-board cuts to a broad range of federal programs. These cuts, established by the 2011 Budget Control Act, were intended as the method of last resort to reduce the federal deficit by \$1.2 trillion during the next 10 years if Congress could not compromise on a deficit-reduction deal. These cuts went into effect March 1, 2013.

Half of the cuts affect military spending and the other half affect domestic programs, like education.

How does it affect education?

Programs in the U.S. Department of Education will be cut by about \$4.1 billion, for Fiscal Year 2013.

Which cuts take effect immediately?

Cuts to federal **Impact Aid** take effect immediately in 55 Washington state school districts and are expected to total just over \$2 million this fiscal year.

Local property taxes are the primary source of funding for Washington state school districts. When large amounts of nontaxable federal lands exist in a district (like an Indian reservation or military base), schools in those areas have no way to generate enough funds to operate. Created in 1950 as a way to offset this revenue problem, federal Impact Aid replaces those lost tax dollars.

Cuts to **Head Start** programs, which provide comprehensive education, health, nutrition, and parent involvement services to low-income families, will also be effective immediately, totaling about \$9 million this fiscal year in Washington state.

Which cuts take effect next school year?

Sequestration also affects funding for **Title I** programs, as well as **special education**. These two programs are “forward funded,” which means this year’s expenses were paid for last year and next year’s expenses will be paid for this year.

Washington state’s Title I funding, intended to improve the academic achievement of students in families with low income, is estimated to be reduced by almost \$13 million for 2013–14.

Special education programs, as part of the Individuals With Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) to help students with special needs, will lose an estimated \$11 million next school year.

What does this mean for my school?

School districts spend most of their budget on salaries, so federal cuts might translate into layoffs. But each district will decide, independently, how to implement the cuts. Other possibilities include cuts to professional development and special programs.

Resources

U.S. Department of Education:

- **State-by-State Title I Impact** (xls)
1.usa.gov/ZEHxYe
- **State-by-State IDEA Impact** (xls)
1.usa.gov/13rjm4v

White House:

- **Wash. State Report - Overall Impact** (pdf)
1.usa.gov/13Zu79V

The Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction is the primary agency charged with overseeing K–12 education in Washington state. Led by State School Superintendent **Randy Dorn**, OSPI works with the state’s 295 school districts to administer basic education programs and implement education reform on behalf of more than one million public school students. www.k12.wa.us

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