

# THE SKANNER™

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# BLACK NATIVITY



PHOTO BY SUSAN FRIED

The Black Nativity Choir prepares for opening night of the Black Nativity at the Moore Theatre Dec. 8-24. The spectacular gospel song play by American poet, journalist, novelist, memoir and short story writer, Langston Hughes, is a beloved annual event. Tickets are available at 1-877-784-4849.

## Funding Poor Schools

### National report shows high poverty schools shortchanged

An analysis of school-level expenditures around the country shows that many high-poverty schools receive less than their fair share of state and local funding, leaving students in high-poverty schools with fewer resources than schools attended by their wealthier peers.

Sop says a new report from the US Department of Education, based on data from 2008-09.

“Educators across the country understand that low-income students need extra support and resources to succeed, but in far too many places policies for assigning teachers and allocating resources are perpetuating the problem rather than solving it,” U.S. Secretary of Education Arne Duncan said in a statement Wednesday. “The good news in this report is that it is feasible for districts to address this problem and it will have a significant impact on educational opportunities for our nation’s poorest children.”

The Title I program is designed to provide extra resources to high-poverty schools to help them meet the greater challenges of educating at-risk students. The law includes a requirement that districts ensure that Title I schools receive “comparability of services” from state and local funds, so that federal funds can serve their intended purpose of supplementing equitable state and local funding.

For the study, Education Department researchers analyzed new school-level spending and teacher salary data submitted by more than 13,000 school districts as required by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) of 2009. This school level expenditure data was made available for the first time ever in this data collection.

Using the data from the ARRA collection, Department staff analyzed the impact and feasibility of making this change to Title I comparability. That policy brief finds that:

— As many as 28 percent of Title I districts would be out of compliance with

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## State Lawmakers to Cut \$2 Billion

### Monthlong special session opens with seemingly impossible task

By Rachel La Corte  
The Associated Press

OLYMPIA, Wash. (AP) — Washington lawmakers are back in Olympia for a 30-day special session focused on addressing the state’s \$1.4 billion shortfall, scheduling immediate hearings to begin exploring areas to cut.

Gov. Chris Gregoire wants the Legislature to send a temporary, half-cent sales tax increase to the statewide ballot as early as March, with the levy pinned to “buying back” cuts that could

be made to areas like education and public safety. Gregoire’s proposed budget calls for close to \$2 billion in cuts, reductions to local governments and fund transfers, leaving \$600 million in the bank.

Democratic leaders in the House and Senate will produce their own plan in the coming weeks. A House hearing was scheduled to begin that process Monday afternoon.

Meanwhile, a new poll shows that 64 percent of Washington voters are likely to support a

temporary sales tax increase to mitigate cuts to education and social services.

The Seattle Times reports that the Elway Research sampling found 43 percent of respondents were “certainly willing” and 21 percent were “probably willing” to back a tax hike proposed by Gov. Chris Gregoire. The governor wants the Legislature to place a ballot measure before voters, asking for a temporary, half-cent sales tax increase.

The Elway Poll of 408 voters was taken Nov. 21-22. The mar-

gin of error was plus or minus 5 percentage points.

Lawmakers are gathering in Olympia Monday for the start of a special session to deal with a projected \$1.4 billion deficit.

State officials are expecting more than 3,000 people from various groups, including Occupy Olympia, to rally at the Capitol building Monday to protest proposed cuts to state program. As of early Monday afternoon, hundreds of people gathered on the Capitol steps,

## Is Sex-Offender Jail Too Expensive?

### Officials consider moving lockup — but nobody wants it near them

TACOMA, Wash. (AP) — The cost of locking up sexually violent felons on an island is growing, and Washington state lawmakers of both parties say officials should consider moving the Special Commitment Center to the mainland.

The mental-health treatment facility for sex offenders, which costs \$42 million a year, had shared McNeil Island with a prison, but budget cuts shuttered the prison

in April.

“If it costs a fortune to run this thing on the island, why are we doing that?” House budget chairman Ross Hunter told the News Tribune of Tacoma. “Let’s run the thing where it’s less expensive.”

But nobody is clamoring to have nearly 300 sex offenders in their backyard. Opposition has built in the Centralia area to housing them at the shuttered Maple Lane

School, a juvenile detention facility in Grand Mound. Another choice, Western State Hospital, may not be well-received either.

Sen. Mike Carrell, whose district includes both McNeil Island and Western State, said he would fight a move to the psychiatric hospital in Lakewood.

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