



Washington State PTA Legislative Update January 26, 2008

Welcome to the 2nd edition of the Grassroots Connection for the 2008 Legislative Session! Each Grassroots connection provides you with a brief recap of last week's events and a preview of the next week. As a reminder, Washington State PTA's top 5 legislative priorities are:

1. K-12 Education Funding
2. Math and Science Education
3. Quality Teaching
4. Student Support Services
5. Special Education Funding

This week in Olympia

Many new bills were introduced this week. (At last count was that there are already 136 education bills alone.) Holding a public hearing is the first step for a bill. All of these hearings are audio-taped live by TVW, so that you can follow the action from your computer. (Go to www.tvw.org Click on "live programming". Click on "live webcasts".) Sometimes there is a "work session" as part of the hearing, where background information about the bill is presented. Other times bills will simply be introduced by staff and their sponsors one by one. After each introduction there is the opportunity for stakeholders and the public to weigh in. Anyone can participate in this process by signing in on sign-in sheets provided at the beginning of the session. The next step is for the bills to be considered in executive session. The public can attend the executive sessions, but they can't comment. During executive session the committee can consider amendments to the bill, vote them up or down, and then consider the underlying bill with or without amendments. They will then vote to give the bill a "do-Pass" recommendation or a "do not pass" recommendation and send it on to either the fiscal committee (Ways and Means, Appropriations, Appropriations Subcommittee on Education, etc.) or the Rules Committee. Each bill must have both a public hearing and an executive session before the first cut-off, on Feb. 8, to stay alive.

K-12 Education Funding

We are bringing up the importance of this issue at every opportunity. On Thursday, WSPTA Vice President, Scott Allen provided testimony as part of an invited education stakeholder panel to the Senate Ways and Means Committee. We were asked where we would put our first dollar, then our first million in spending for this session. Each participant brought up again the importance of the work of the Basic Education Finance Task Force to address the true big picture needs. PTA then discussed using whatever funding was available to help all students meet learning goals. We stressed that this

funding needs to be flexible, so that it could meet the needs of diverse districts, but also targeted to specific known needs, such as LAP, ELL, teacher support (which could include class size reduction and professional development), student support services and CTE programs. There was much agreement amongst the major education stakeholders as to the current spending priorities.

Math and Science

WSPTA President Laura Bay testified on Thursday as part of an invited stakeholder panel with regard to the math standards, curriculum and graduation requirements. She stressed system capacity issues and the importance of making sure that all of these pieces fit together, so that they can work for all teachers and all students.

WASL/Assessment System

This week there was a lot of attention given to the WASL and related issues. Monday was deemed "WASL day" as the Senate Education Committee heard several bills regarding the implementation of the WASL as a graduation requirement as well as other bills related to testing and educational supports for students. WSPTA, PTA Membership Director, Dori Tate, and member Ian King weighed in on this legislation during the public hearing. This theme continued during the week, as additional bills which would provide support for struggling students were introduced.

Next week in Olympia

Next week things really heat up. Many more bills will also be introduced, while others introduced previously will be heard in executive session.

Here are the key hearings related to our priorities:

K-12 Education Funding

WSPTA has been invited to testify as a member of the following stakeholder panel on developing a statewide accountability program.

Early Learning & K-12 Education - 01/31/08 10:00 am

Full Committee

Senate Hearing Rm 1
J.A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA

Work Session:

1. Current Focused Assistance/School Improvement program by the Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction.
2. State Board of Education efforts to develop a statewide accountability system.
3. Invited stakeholder panels.

Math and Science

The Senate Committee on Early Learning and K-12 Education will review two math bills (highlighted) as part of a large hearing and executive session on Monday afternoon.

We are also following the progress of many of the other bills that are now in executive session. I am including them all to show you the quantity. Look at all that they will cover in only two hours! Public testimony from now on will need to be very brief.

Early Learning & K-12 Education* - 01/28/08 1:30 pm

Full Committee

Senate Hearing Rm 1
J.A. Cherberg Building
Olympia, WA

REVISED 1/25/2008 9:31 AM

Public Hearing:

1. [SB 6313](#) - Recognizing disability history in the public education system.
2. [SB 6388](#) - Creating pilot programs for learning disabilities, including autism spectrum disorder.
3. [SB 6742](#) - Requiring development of programs and guidelines for students with autism.
4. [SB 6743](#) - Regarding training and guidelines for teachers of students with autism.
5. [SB 6535](#) - Requiring an assessment of the need for teacher preparation programs for teachers of visually impaired and blind public school students.
6. [SB 6135](#) - Eliminating requirements for scoliosis screening in schools.
7. [SB 6813](#) - Creating a roving early intervention specialist pilot program.

Executive Session:

1. [SB 6042](#) - Requiring a recess period for elementary school students.
2. [SB 6314](#) - Providing for arts education funding.
3. [SB 6538](#) - Creating programs to improve reading instruction.
4. [SB 6503](#) - **Approving the segmented mathematics assessment as an alternative assessment.**
5. [SB 6673](#) - Creating extended learning opportunities.
6. [SB 6454](#) - Creating programs to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care.
7. [SB 6453](#) - Clarifying the timeline for release of education records to the department of social and health services.
8. [SB 6377](#) - Regarding secondary career and technical education.
9. [SB 6380](#) - Enhancing school library programs.
10. [SB 6549](#) - Creating the sustainable environment culminating project grant program.
11. [SB 6376](#) - Regarding the basic education funding allocation for certificated instructional staff.
12. [SB 6534](#) - **Regarding the revision of mathematics standards.**

Math Continued... and Quality Teaching

The House will have a public hearing on the segmented math assessment, which would give students another math alternative, an approach which PTA supports, on Tues. We will also pay attention to the proposal for an online math curriculum. During this hearing there are also two bills being heard which could fit into

Unlike the Senate, the House has not listed the bills it will hear in Executive Session next week. We will be watching to see what happens to bills of interest.

Education - 01/29/08 1:30 pm

Full Committee

House Hearing Rm B
John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA

Public Hearing:

1. [HB 2831](#) - Creating a study regarding teacher preparation in Washington state.
2. [HB 2813](#) - Requiring an assessment of the need for teacher preparation programs for teachers of visually impaired and blind public school students.
3. [HB 2870](#) - Providing opportunities for professional development for instructional assistants.
4. [HB 2804](#) - Establishing an endowment for the promotion of geography education.
5. [HB 2781](#) - Enhancing Washington state history and government course requirements for high school graduation.
6. [HB 2598](#) - Directing the office of the superintendent of public instruction to issue a request for proposals for development of an online mathematics curriculum.
7. [HB 2599](#) - Recognizing disability history in the public education system.
8. [HB 2976](#) - Approving the segmented mathematics assessment as an alternative assessment.

Possible Executive Session: Bills previously heard in committee.

Quality Teaching and Student Support Services

House Ed also has a public hearing on Thurs. at 8AM in HHR B, which will include several bills of interest which relate to [HB 2458](#) - Regarding the basic education funding allocation for certificated instructional staff.

1. [HB 2773](#) - Regarding instructional support services in schools.
2. [HB 2886](#) - Increasing the number of school nurses.
3. [HB 2869](#) - Extending the national board for professional teaching standards bonus to certificated principals.
4. [HB 2775](#) - Regarding bonuses for instructional staff certified by the national board for professional teaching standards.
5. [HB 3097](#) - Specifying authority of the executive director of the state board of education.
6. [HB 2954](#) - Authorizing certain school districts and educational service districts to designate a district treasurer.
7. [HB 2884](#) - Requiring policies on and limiting the use of mechanical, chemical, and physical restraint of students.

The third House Ed hearing is on Friday at 1:30 HHR B.

The item of greatest interest here is a report of Statewide End-of-Course Assessments, which will be given at the start of the hearing during a work session.

Please feel free to contact me if you have questions about these bills, the process or how to get involved.

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