



Washington State PTA Legislative Update March 2, 2008

Welcome to the 7th 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

Last week in Olympia

Our Presence was Evident!

Monday night, February 25th, in Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, Washington PTA President Laura Bay spoke on behalf of the Association on House Bill 3317, regarding standards and curriculum in mathematics and science and HB 2809, regarding mathematics and science teachers.

On Wednesday at the 8:00 a.m. public hearing of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, PTA Vice-President Scott Allen provided testimony on House Bill 3166, concerning the design of the state assessment system and the WASL.

In addition, Donna Christensen, PTA lobbyist, provided support for a number of PTA priority issues. These steps included informing Education Committee members of our backing of Senate Bill 6879, which requires a report from the Joint Task Force on Basic Education Finance by December 1, 2008 and requires the Task Force to consider issues related to salary equalization across school districts. The bill was passed out of Committee and sent to Rules.

Our support for Senate Bill 6673 was also indicated in House Education. The bill provides programs which support struggling students. The bill was passed out of Committee with a striker amendment that added an enhanced funding allocation within LAP for school districts with more than 20 percent of students in transitional bilingual programs and where the percent of K-12 enrollment eligible for Free or Reduced Price Lunch also exceeds 40 percent. Subject to funding, the OSPI must contract with a national organization to establish and operate an endowment for the promotion of geography education. The organization must have experience operating geography education endowments and provide equal non-state matching funds. After adoption, the bill was sent to House Appropriations.

PTA also supported House Bill 1806, regarding the development of a model integrated pest management program. The Early Learning and K-12 Committee amended the bill. In its current form, HB 1806 requires WSSDA, in consultation with the Department of Health and the Department of Agriculture, to develop a model integrated pest management policy that emphasizes the use of non-chemical pest control measures. The pest management policy must be disseminated to all school districts. School districts must then adopt a policy. The amendment also removes the requirement that each school district obtain certification and instead makes it a recommendation. After amending the bill, it was given a do-pass recommendation and will be heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Monday, March 3.

The main event last week was the release of the Senate Budget proposal on Tuesday in a public hearing of the Ways and Means Committee.

By the end of the week, the budget had been approved by the Senate and sent back to the House. The House and the Senate have now both passed budgets for the 2008 Supplemental cycle. Given that each body has established different priorities and different spending levels, the budget will now go to conference committee. The public has little opportunity to see the negotiating process, but can continue to impact the outcome of those negotiations by contacting their legislators about funding priorities.

The complete Senate budget bill, as it passed the Senate, can be found at:
http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2008/so2008_Bill0228.pdf

In addition, LEV did an excellent side-by-side of the House and Senate budgets in a few selected areas. You can find that side-by-side at: http://www.educationvoters.org/legislation/2008_supplemental

The Senate budget bill includes the following in the K-12 Education area:

\$39 million - Compensation Under Initiative 732

The Seattle Consumer Price Index (CPI) used to calculate the 2008-09 school year salary increase required by Initiative 732 is higher than originally expected. Funding is provided to cover the increased costs associated with an increase from the 2.8% assumed in the original 2007-09 budget to the current projection of 3.9%. The Senate budget does not include the additional 1% the House provided in their budget proposal.

\$26.9 million - Student Learning Opportunities

Funding is provided for SB 6673 which has provisions aimed at providing additional support for those students who need assistance to meet state and local high school graduation requirements, meet WASL standards, and/or are English language learners. The budget expands funding by 30% for the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). LAP also provides extended learning opportunities to struggling students.

\$12.5 million - Classified Staffing Ratio Enhancement

Currently, the apportionment formula provides for one classified staff for every 59 students. Beginning in the 2008-09 school year, additional funding is provided to lower the classified staff ratio to 1 per 58 students.

\$11.4 million General Fund and \$9.8 million Health Services Account - Special Education Medicaid Enhancement

Beginning with the 2007-08 school year, federal regulations have changed the reimbursement for school-based Medicaid eligible services. DSHS will now reimburse school districts directly and state funding is provided to match federal funds. The net effect will be an anticipated \$21.2 million increase in the amount school districts will receive through the state and federal Medicaid program.

\$11.7 million - School Librarians

Funding is provided for an allocation of \$12 per student to maintain and improve library materials, collections, and services. It is intended that this funding will be used to augment current funding for library programs.

\$3.0 million - Career and Technical Education

Funding is provided for the implementation of SB 6377 (career and technical education). Of this amount, \$2.7 million is provided for grants and allocations to school districts and skills centers to support additional high demand career and technical education programs, summer school programs, and other related activities. A maximum of \$300,000 is provided for administrative costs, including the establishment of a career and technical education awareness campaign.

\$1.8 million - Levy Equalization

The per pupil inflator is a factor used in the calculation of the amounts that can be collected through local school district levies and it impacts state levy equalization payments. Based on various increases included in the budget, the per pupil inflator is expected to increase to 6 percent in the 2008-09 school year. Funding is provided for the increased state levy equalization costs resulting from this change.

\$4.8 Million - Miscellaneous Increases

Funding is provided for a variety of other increases, including: (1) additional funding to continue improvements to the OSPI apportionment system; (2) SB 5714 (world languages) establishing two pilot programs; (3) a school district grant program to implement SB 6438 (local farms and healthy kids); (4) grants at five skills centers to implement Integrated

Basic Education and Skills Training programs (IBEST); (5) the task force created in SB 6466 (world languages); (6) legislation dealing with improving services to students with autism; and (7) an evaluation of math and science teacher supply and demand issues.

WASL BUDGET ITEMS

\$25.4 million - Assessment contract renewal

In the maintenance level budget, funding is provided for a significant increase in contracted costs related to administering Washington's Assessment of Student Learning (WASL).

\$15.9 million - Savings from WASL changes

Savings are achieved by: (1) redesigning the Washington Assessment of Student Learning (WASL) in reading, mathematics, and science by shortening test administration; (2) reducing the number of open-ended response items; (3) potentially decreasing the number of items utilized in the assessment, particularly in grades tested as a result of the federal No Child Left Behind Act; and (4) other efficiencies in the WASL contractor procurement process. As these changes are instituted, it is assumed that funding provided in the original 2007-09 budget will allow school districts to implement diagnostic assessments and progress monitoring that will give more immediate and targeted information to teachers during the school year. As a result, it is assumed that this will improve the assessment system while maintaining the reliability and validity of the WASL.

\$150,000 - WASL Legislative Workgroup

As the changes described previously are taking place, funding is provided for the establishment of a legislative workgroup on the WASL to review and evaluate the state's assessment system. Additionally, funding is provided for contracting with independent technical experts to advise the WASL workgroup on best practices in other states and potential options for improving the assessment system. It is anticipated that the workgroup will complete its review by January 1, 2009.

\$1.7 million - Translated and Accommodated WASL

Funding is provided to translate the WASL for math and science in six languages other than English. In addition, funding is provided for enhanced accommodations for students in special education, such as improved Braille forms of the tests and read aloud CDs for dyslexic students.

On Saturday, March 1 the House Appropriations Committee held its marathon hearing to review policy bills with fiscal impact. The hearing started at 9:00 a.m. and did not end until 6:45. During the hearing, the members heard public testimony on a large number of bills, including two that came from the Education Committee:

1. ESSB 5714 - Creating a pilot program of Spanish and Chinese language instruction. In its current form, the bill establishes the program for two school districts to provide the instruction in elementary schools. OSPI must determine the grant recipients by June 15, 2008. For purposes of the pilot, school districts would be allowed to employ people of unusual competence who are not certificated - but they would be supervised by a certificated instructional staff person. Parents will be notified about the pilot and they would be allowed to participate in the program's evaluation. OSPI will report to the Governor and the Legislature on the effectiveness of the program and make recommendations as to its future.

2. E2SSB 6673 - Creates learning opportunities to assist students to obtain a high school diploma. The House Education Committee amended the bill and it has quite a list of provisions:

- Creates an Extended Learning Opportunities Program for students not on track to graduate that includes required notification of students about their graduation status and use of existing resources to provide various types of instructional services.
- Requires Educational Service Districts to provide outreach to community-based organizations serving non-English speaking populations and other student groups to inform them about learning opportunities.
- Creates an enhanced allocation for the Learning Assistance Program for school districts with more than 20 percent of student enrollment in the Transitional Bilingual Program and more than 40 percent low-income students.
- Directs the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to explore on-line curriculum in other languages and provide a report on dyslexia pilot reading programs.
- Requires school districts to provide all ninth grade students the option to take the PSAT at no cost, if funds are provided.
- Directs the Professional Educator Standards Board to develop recommendations to improve the standards for teacher preparation and the expected teacher competencies in how to teach English language learner students.
- Allows eighth grade students in the first year of the Washington College Bound Scholarship an additional year to sign up for the scholarship.

- Directs the OSPI to contract with a national organization to create a geography education endowment with non-state matching funds, if funding is provided.

This week in Olympia

Monday - March 3

This is the deadline for fiscal committees to report out bills from the opposite house. House Appropriations and its subcommittees, House Finance, House Capital Budget, House Transportation, Senate Ways and Means and Senate Transportation will meet on Monday. To see exact times and locations for these sessions go to www.leg.wa.gov Click on Committee Meetings and then choose March 3. You may also listen via TVW.

The next four days will be mainly floor action, as the legislators have until Friday, March 7 to move on opposite house bills. There are a few work sessions on topics of interest early in the morning before the floor sessions begin. For complete listings, follow the directions above and click on the committee of interest to check out their agenda.

Tuesday - March 4

Comprehensive School Health Reform, Interim Leg. Task Force - 03/04/08 8:30 am

Full Committee
(360) 786-7392
Rules Room
Legislative Bldg.
Olympia, WA

Agenda:

1. Governance Issues.
2. Future Meeting Planning.

The rest of Tuesday will be House and Senate Caucus/Session.

Wednesday - March 5

Higher Education - 03/05/08 8:00 am

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

Work Session: Innovation in research and development.

Health Care & Wellness* - 03/05/08 8:30 am

Full Committee
Jt. w/ Community & Economic Development & Trade
House Hearing Rm A
John L. O'Brien Building
Olympia, WA

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Work Session: Health Care and Economic Development.

The rest of Wednesday will be House and Senate Caucus/Session.

Thursday - March 6

Education - 03/06/08 9:00 am

Full Committee

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

Work Session: Interim planning.

Early Learning & Children's Services - 03/06/08 9:00 am

Full Committee

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

Work Session:

1. Childcare and early learning programs on higher education campuses.
2. Childhood hunger.

The rest of Thursday will be House and Senate Caucus/Session.

Friday - March 7

Like the other days there are a few work sessions on Friday as well. See the schedule for details. Again on Friday there will be House and Senate caucus and floor sessions.

Friday is the last day for bills to be considered on the floor of the opposite house.

Thurs., March 13, 2008 session adjourns for the year.

Bill update on bills we have been following which are still alive.

Bills that are in a fiscal committee must be moved to Rules by the end of the day tomorrow to survive. Bills that are in Rules must be moved to the floor calendar for vote by Friday in order to survive.

1. **K-12 Education Funding** – [SSB 6879](#) - Regarding the joint task force on basic education finance. House Rules committee.
2. **Math and Science Education** – [2SHB 2598](#) - Regarding an online mathematics curriculum. Senate Rules Committee. SHB 2809, a study bill regarding recruitment of math and science teachers. Senate Ways and Means.
3. **Quality Teaching** – SHB 2775 which would add an additional bonus for Nationally Board certified teachers who teach in high poverty areas – Senate Ways and Means.
4. **Student Support Services** – [ESSB 6380](#) - Enhancing school library programs. House Appropriations. (We were more supportive of the House version because of it more closely aligned with our issue. That version died.)
5. **Special Education Funding** – No bills currently fit our issue. However, additional funding (23.2 million) is being added to the Special Education safety net funding, based on approved awards.

Other issues of interest:

Assessment System -

ESHB 3166 concerning the redesign of the WASL and end of course assessments. Rules Committee.

Recess and PE – No bills remain which fit our issue.

World Language – [2SHB 2523](#) - Creating the position of world language supervisor in the office of the superintendent of public instruction. Senate Ways and Means.

Education Reform –

[SHB 2810](#) - Enhancing resources and assistance in school districts with concentrations of English language learners. Senate Ways and Means.

ESSB 6673 creating extended learning opportunities and instructional support for English language learners, low-income students, and students with learning disabilities. House Appropriations.

Foster Kids - [SHB 2679](#) - Creating programs to improve educational outcomes for students in foster care. Senate Ways and Means.

Release of Student Information – HB 2026 which would grant other government program recruiters such as Americorps and Peace Corps, the same access as military recruiters. Senate Rules. (This is quite different from our issue, but we are following it. There was an unsuccessful attempt to get this bill amended to address our issue.)