

February 28, 2022

Into the home stretch

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Last week saw the release of five 2022 supplemental budgets, all on Monday, February 21: the House and Senate operating budgets, House capital budget, and both House and Senate transportation budgets. While there are several similarities, the budgets took different approaches to some of the biggest issues this session, including school district enrollment stabilization, restoring riparian habitat and salmon recovery, and expenditures of billions of new state revenues and unallocated federal funds.

The Senate passed its versions of the operating budget ([ESSB 5693](#)), capital budget ([SSB 5651](#)), and the transportation budget ([ESSB 5689](#)) last week. The House caught the operating and transportation budgets on the fly, brought them to the floor, and replaced the Senate versions with House versions and amendments during Saturday deliberations. This will send those two budgets into conference committee for budget negotiators to iron out their differences.

Also passed by the Senate was the Move Ahead WA transportation revenue package ([ESSB 5974](#)) by a 29-20 vote. The revenue package underwrites \$16.8 billion in projects. One of the planned revenue streams, a six cent per gallon tax on fuels exported from Washington state, ran into a serious buzzsaw over the last few weeks. Last Friday House Democrats decided to pivot, jettisoning the unpopular tax to instead grab \$100 million per fiscal year for 16 years from the Public Works Assistance Account. For the last six years, more than \$150 million a fiscal year has been diverted from local government infrastructure to support the McCleary fix by sending funding to the Education Legacy Trust Account. Stay tuned; it's about to get messy.

In addition to all the budget activity, February 24 marked the deadline by which bills were required to pass out of the opposite chamber policy committees. The next deadline is Monday, February 28, when bills must pass out of budget committees – both the Senate Ways & Means and House Appropriations committees have marathon executive action sessions planned. Finally, Friday, March 4, at 5:00 PM is the final deadline for bills to pass out of the opposite chamber. Look for some really long days and nights starting Tuesday, March 1.

What we're watching this week

HB 1590 (enrollment stabilization) and HB 1664 (school staffing ratio increases) are up for executive action Monday.

- On HB 1590, Senator Wellman is offering an amendment that would reduce the levy stabilization to the 2023 calendar year (change from 2023 and 2024 calendar years). It also includes a statement in the intent section that says it is the legislature's intent that enrollment stabilization funding will not be provided in the future.
 - Senator Braun is offering two amendments, one of which would replace the enrollment stabilization with a \$250 per student FTE allocation; and

- Senator Schoesler is offering an amendment that would prevent any enrollment stabilization funding from being used to increase compensation for employees or contractors, with the exception of salary inflationary increases.
- Senator Wellman also has a striking amendment to HB 1664, increasing school staffing ratios for school nurses, social workers, psychologists, and school counselors. According to the “effect statement” the impact of the amendment is to remove the three-year phase-in for increasing the allocations in the prototypical school funding model, resulting in the increases taking effect immediately on September 1, 2022. The bill retains a three-year phase-in for increasing nurse allocations.

Here is the proposal under the Wellman striker:

	Nurses	Social workers	Psychologists	Guidance Counselors
<i>Current:</i>				
Elementary	0.076	0.042	0.017	0.493
Middle	0.060	0.006	0.002	1.216
High School	0.096	0.015	0.007	2.539
<i>For the 2022-23 school year, minimum allocations are increased to:</i>				
Elementary	0.246	0.311	0.104	0.993
Middle	0.336	0.088	0.024	1.716
High School	0.339	0.127	0.049	3.039
<i>For the 2023-24 school year, in addition to the minimum allocations:</i>				
Elementary	0.170			
Middle	0.276			
High School	0.243			
<i>Proposed new allocations for 2024-25 school year and beyond:</i>				
Elementary	0.585	0.311	0.104	0.993
Middle	0.888	0.088	0.024	1.716
High School	0.824	0.127	0.049	3.039

The third of the so-called “Big 3” bills this session – HB 1808 and SB 5581 – do not appear to be advancing at this point in session. HB 1808 died in Senate education last week and SB 5581 hasn’t been scheduled in House Appropriations. The bills only were funded at \$63,000 for the 2022-23 school year, so it’s possible more work on the policy will be done over the interim.

Another priority bill is HB 1699, which will extend the hours of a retiree from a cap of 867 to 1,040 through July 1, 2025. The bill applies to non-administrative positions and administrative positions in Class 2 districts who serve as a superintendent or building-level administrator. Senator Rolfes is offering an amendment which doesn’t appear to alter the purpose of the bill but clarifies they can rescind it if they find it is abused. Past President Michelle Nims was the only testifier at Saturday’s Senate Ways & Means Committee.

Other bills we are keeping an eye on for possible amendment:

- HB 1153 – improving language access
- HB 1611 – universal screening of highly capable students
- HB 1760 – providing dual credit for Running Start students
- HB 1723 – improving digital equity
- SB 5720 – increasing financial literacy

Bills that missed the February 24 policy committee cutoff

- HB 1162 would have created the performance exhibition as a new graduation pathway.
- HB 1746 would have required the Washington State University to create reports that: (1) summarize educational services and supports offered since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic and describe the implementation of social-emotional learning standards; and (2) update a 2015 report identifying the prevalence of resilience factors relevant to student success.
- SB 5181 would have authorized school districts to create partnerships and limited liability companies, and enter into leases, loans, and other agreements with public or private entities for the purpose of financing school facilities through certain federal tax credit programs.
- SB 5638 would have allowed an applicant for associate licensure as a social worker, mental health counselor, or marriage and family therapist to work while their application for associate licensure is pending.
- SB 5884 would have required the Department of Health to partner with the University of Washington to develop rules for the certification for behavioral health support specialists by January 1, 2024. Also would have defined behavioral health support specialists as paraprofessionals with at least a bachelor's degree level of education who practice in partnership with a licensed behavioral health professional who has behavioral health in their scope of practice, including at a licensed community behavioral health agency.
- SB 5979 would have created a tutoring program for students; the bill was introduced after the deadline and \$1 million was incorporated into the Senate proposed operating budget, SB 5693.

Advocacy in Action

- Past-president Michelle Nims spoke in favor of adding a performance exhibit as a graduation pathway to demonstrate proficiencies that align with the student's High School and Beyond Plan. Listen to her testimony today in favor of E2SHB 1162 [here](#).
- On Tuesday, February 22, Advocacy Director Lizzy Sebring urged members of the Senate Ways and Means Committee to pass HB 1590, a bill that would stabilize state and local funding losses due to enrollment decline. Listen to Lizzy [here](#). Funding was included in both the Senate and House budgets to support stabilization.
- Speaking in favor of increasing school staffing ratios for nurses, psychologists, social workers and school counselors, Advocacy Committee member Mike Uehara-Bingen waited nearly three hours to deliver one minute of testimony in the Senate Ways & Means Committee also that evening. Listen to Mike [here](#). The Senate funding levels are higher than the House and are preferred.

- DaleAnn Baker is a professional engineer and parent advocate in the 10th legislative district. She's also the author of the WSPTA-adopted position on school safety and emergency preparedness. Listen to DaleAnn's thoughtful testimony [here](#) before the House Capital Budget Committee on February 25. The bill is scheduled for a vote on Monday, February 28.

The Week Ahead

(Schedule subject to change)

Monday, February 28

Capital Budget (House) - Virtual - 2/28 @ 8:00am

- [SSB 5933](#) - Exec Session - Establishing a school seismic safety grant program. (Support/High)

Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual - 2/28 @ 10:00am

- [E2SHB 1099](#) - Exec Session - Improving the state's climate response through updates to the state's comprehensive planning framework. (Support/Monitoring)
- [E2SHB 1153](#) - Exec Session - Addressing language access in public schools. (Support/Medium)
- [SHB 1590](#) - Exec Session - Concerning enrollment stabilization funding to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Support/High)
- [E2SHB 1659](#) - Exec Session - Making higher education more affordable and accessible for students by bridging the gap between cost and need to reduce barriers, improve opportunity, and advance economic security. (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SHB 1664](#) - Exec Session - Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools. (Support/High)
- [EHB 1687](#) - Exec Session - Enhancing the college bound scholarship program by increasing opportunities for students to attend community and technical colleges. (Support/Monitoring)
- [ESHB 1699](#) - Exec Session - Permitting individuals retired from the public employees retirement system, the teachers retirement system, and the school employees retirement system additional opportunities to work for a school district for up to 1,040 hours per school year while in receipt of pension benefits until July 1, 2025. (Support/High)
- [E2SHB 1723](#) - Exec Session - Closing the digital equity divide by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services, devices, and training. (Support/High)
- [E2SHB 1736](#) - Exec Session - Establishing a state student loan program. (Support/Monitoring)
- [E2SHB 1760](#) - Exec Session - Expanding access to dual credit programs. (Support/Medium)
- [SHB 1800](#) - Exec Session - Increasing access to behavioral health services for minors. (Support/Monitoring)
- [HB 1805](#) - Exec Session - Concerning the opportunity scholarship program. (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SHB 1835](#) - Exec Session - Creating outreach and completion initiatives to increase postsecondary enrollment.
- [2SHB 1890](#) - Exec Session - Concerning the children and youth behavioral health work group. (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SHB 1905](#) - Exec Session - Reducing homelessness for youth and young adults discharging from a publicly funded system of care. (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SHB 2078](#) - Exec Session - Establishing the outdoor learning grant program. (Monitoring)

Appropriations (House) - Virtual - 2/28 @ 11:00am

- [2SSB 5720](#) - Exec Session - Providing student financial literacy education. (Support/Monitoring)
- [SSB 5722](#) - Exec Session - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions in buildings. (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SSB 5789](#) - Public Hearing - Creating the Washington career and college pathways innovation challenge program. (Remote testimony.) (Support/Monitoring)
- [2SSB 5789](#) - Exec Session - Creating the Washington career and college pathways innovation challenge program. (Support/Monitoring)
- [SSB 5790](#) - Exec Session - Strengthening critical community support services for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- [SSB 5892](#) - Public Hearing - Establishing pilot projects for utilizing high school student nursing assistant-certified programs to address the nursing workforce shortage and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals. (Remote testimony.) (Support/Monitoring)
- [SSB 5892](#) - Exec Session - Establishing pilot projects for utilizing high school student nursing assistant-certified programs to address the nursing workforce shortage and promote nursing careers in rural hospitals. (Support/Monitoring)