



February 25, 2018

The week of February 19 was one of the busiest of this 60-day session, with the House and Senate releasing their supplemental spending plans for the operating, capital and transportation budgets. Keeping the pedal to the metal, the Senate Ways & Means voted the [operating](#) and capital budgets out of committee, while the Appropriations Committee voted out the [House operating budget](#). Both chambers passed amended operating budgets on Friday evening, with the Senate also voting the [capital budget](#) off the floor. The House Capital Budget will vote on [its proposal](#) Monday, with action early in the week.

As passed their respective chambers, both 2018 operating budgets would accelerate funding of educator salaries for the 2018-19 school year, to meet the Supreme Court's November order to comply with full funding of K-12 education by September 1, 2018. Initially the House proposed maintaining a 50 percent rollout next school year, with 100 percent in 2019-20. But as it passed the floor, the House salary approach now mirrors the Senate's.

In addition to all the budget action, Friday served as the last day for policy bills to pass out of committee. Monday will be the final day for fiscal bills, which had the House Appropriations Committee and Senate Ways & Means Committee holding marathon public hearings on Saturday. Friday March 2 marks the last day to consider bills from the opposite chamber, unless they are necessary to implement the budget.

[Status of Legislative Priorities](#)

(all bills may be accessed [here](#) and typing in the bill number):

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - HB 1377 passed out of Senate education and had a lively hearing on Saturday. The tragic murders in the Florida high school on Valentine's Day have captured the attention of the Senate budget committee in a big way. Proponents were asked what could be done to strengthen the mental health professionals in schools and to provide information to the committee. Committee Chair Christine Rolfes said they would be working on some language.
- Ample Funding Basic Education
 - *2242 Fixes*: The House Appropriations Committee held a public hearing on [E2SSB 6362](#) on Saturday. The bill is scheduled to be voted out of committee Monday, February 26th. The House has said it wants to include levy flexibility, experience factor, special education increases, K-3 extension by a year, a comprehensive hold harmless, and a fix to the resident student definition (in which OSPI formally stated it was pushing for "enrolled" students and not the definition originally submitted by OSPI).
- Closing the Opportunity Gap
 - Nothing new this week.
- Standards for Paraeducators
 - SB 6388 passed the House Education Committee and has been sent to Rules. \$250,000 for training and the modules is included in both House and Senate operating budgets.

- Breakfast after the Bell
 - The bill finally achieved House concurrence last week. However, there is big problem with the funding: The Senate budget includes about half of what is needed, while the House budget doesn't include funding for HB 1508. Advocates are reaching out to budget writers to ensure that final budgets include \$2.5 million for the start-up grants to support adoption in schools that have 70 percent or more students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

Here's a quick look at bills that relate to WSPTA's "Also Supported Positions" adopted at Legislative Assembly and WSPTA resolutions:

- **Dual Credit, Equity & Support.** While [SB 5917](#) passed the Senate and we thought there was agreement in the House Higher Education Committee, the bill was modified significantly in the policy committee. Rather than setting the level at 4 for IB and E for Cambridge, the bill now would require colleges and universities to adopt policies for IB and Cambridge, including the possible awarding of credit for a 4 or higher on Standard Level or Higher Level exams or an E on Cambridge. The Council of Presidents said it wanted to work with WSPTA over the interim to help implement the bill. There still may be time to modify, but Rep. Gerry Pollet said legislators thought the AP language from last session was confusing and this language would make it clear that higher education needed to address the issue but didn't tell them how to do it.
- **Family & Community Engagement.** [ESHB 1618](#) has been passed to Senate Rules.
- **School Construction.**
 - [SB 6531](#) had a hearing February 19th; the chair remains unimpressed by the concept. Proponents argued for at least starting on the K-6 student space allocation.
 - A Joint Legislative Task Force on School Construction was created in the 2017-19 capital budget. At least the House members have been named: the appointments include Democratic Reps. Marcus Riccelli and Monica Stonier, and Republican Reps. Vicky Kraft and Mike Steele.
- **Teacher Shortage.** [4SHB 1827](#) had a supportive public hearing Saturday, but the huge fiscal note may make it difficult to pass. Proponents said the measure was scalable – the Legislature could fund what it wanted in this supplemental year – and they encouraged legislators to pass the policy.
- **Post-secondary/Higher Education Access & Affordability.** [HB 1512](#) has passed to Senate Ways & Means. The bill would expand a student's eligibility for the College Bound Scholarship to the 8th grade and allow eligible students to sign the pledge in the 9th or 10th grade, beginning in the 2018-19 school year. The bill also would prioritize students for the State Need Grant who have family incomes in the 0-70 percent median family income range.
- **Assessments.** Bills on this topic appear dead this session, but both operating budgets reduce funding for assessments – it is unclear why since OSPI is not reporting a need to reduce the funding.
- **Property tax reduction.** Due to the robust revenue forecast projections over the next four years, both the House and Senate have proposals that would decrease the state property tax.
 - [HB 2993](#) would transfer nearly \$1 billion from the budget stabilization account to the state general fund in this biennium (\$231,839,000 by June 30, 2018, and \$763,953,000 by June 30, 2019), and would lower state property tax from \$2.70 to \$2.365/\$1000 AV in CY 2019 and to \$2.30/\$1000 AV in CY 2020.
 - a. [SB 6614](#) would transfer \$213 million on July 1, 2018 and \$190 million on July 1, 2019 into the general fund for common schools and would decrease the state property tax from \$2.70 to \$2.39/\$1000 AV in CY 2019 only (CY 2018, CY 2020, and CY 2021 would be at \$2.70/\$1000 AV).

- **School meals.** [HB 2610](#) was severely modified in the Senate education committee and received a hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on Saturday. The school meal shaming language was removed, as was other language WSPTA would have supported. The House operating budget included funding to implement the bill as it passed the House.
- **Dyslexia.** [E2SSB 6162](#) was modified again in the House Education committee to address issues raised by the special education community, as well as in response to concerns from members about the unintended consequences of the bill. It was sent to House Rules. Funding was provided in the Senate operating budget for the task force to meet.
- **Foster Youth.** [SSB 6223](#) was amended in House Education to replace a statewide nonprofit organization with the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight & Accountability on the task force.

WSPTA's Week in Review

WSPTA Region 6 Director Sherry Rudolph testified on SB 6531 (school construction) in the House Capital Budget Committee on February 19. Legislative Consultant Marie Sullivan testified in the Senate Ways & Means Committee in favor of HB 1377 (SEL professionals) and HB 1827 (teacher shortage), and in the House Appropriations Committee on SB 6362 (fixes to 2242) on February 24.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change)

Capital Budget (House) - HHR B, JLOB - 2/26 @ 9:00am

- HB 2395 - Exec Session - Concerning the capital budget.

Appropriations (House) - HHR A, JLOB - 2/26 @ 11:00am

- 2SSB 6274 - Exec Session - Helping former foster youth and youth experiencing homelessness access and complete college and registered apprenticeships.
- E2SSB 6362 - Exec Session - Modifying basic education funding provisions.