

February 8, 2019

Snowmageddon strikes but Advocacy Week continues

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Even before forecasts of large snowstorms across the state were announced for February 8th through the weekend and Governor Jay Inslee declared an emergency, Olympia started the week with a dusting of snow. Schools were closed or delayed, people were encouraged not to drive, and stores started seeing a run on food staples. But at the Capitol? It was business as usual during week four.

In fact, the pace in some ways increased this week, as committees began to prepare for the first cutoff deadline of February 22 to move bills out of policy committees by setting aside time at regular meetings to vote on legislation.

All lightness aside, unfortunately the anticipated weekend snowfall caused many events to be cancelled, including the February 11 WSPTA Focus Day/Day on the Hill. WSPTA will continue to hold its Advocacy Week, which is a daily focus on Top 5 priorities and an opportunity to reach out every day on a different topic with your local legislators and leadership - sign up for these [action alerts](#) to participate.

The unprecedented snow storms have led to the Legislature changing its schedule for at least Monday, February 11 – check the daily [committee schedule](#) for changes to week 5 committee hearings.

Status of Top 5 Legislative Priorities (all bills may be accessed [here](#))

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - SB 5082 had a hearing in Senate Ways & Means February 7. Questions have been raised about the size of the fiscal note, so we anticipate a possible change from the fiscal committee.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee held a hearing February 6 on bills that would lower the threshold to pass bonds to a simple majority + one, and a competing idea of dropping the threshold to 55%. State Superintendent [Chris Reykdal engaged in some light sparring](#) with Senate Republicans, who questioned the tax burden, the time to pay back on the bonds and whether all bonds should pass.
 - Chair Senator Lisa Wellman, D-Mercer Island, said she planned to move forward both ideas and let the broader Senate debate the merits of which bill is adopted, if either one earns the necessary 60 votes. Wellman couched the change in threshold as a “safety” issue, bringing up the lead in water found in Flint, Michigan and the impact on students’ health.

- SB 5572 would create a separate fund for small, rural and distressed schools to apply to for school construction, modernization and renovation. The concept was the top [recommendation](#) by the Joint Task Force on Improving State Funding for School Construction, a legislative work group that met over the summer.
- Senator Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, has introduced SB 5853, which would phase in higher student space allocations starting in Fiscal Year 2022, and cost allocations starting in Fiscal Year 2026. The recommendations for increasing the state payment on cost per square foot and increasing the student space allocation were also recommendations by the Task Force. The bill is scheduled for a public hearing in Senate Ways & Means on February 14.
- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - WSPTA continues to sign in as support for measures before the legislature, including bills that would limit high capacity magazines to 10 rounds.
- Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage:
 - The House Education Committee passed HB 1139 out of committee with a handful of amendments designed to bring the Senate on board once the bill reaches that chamber. The bill has a fiscal impact so its next stop is the House Appropriations Committee.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.
 - Ideas are starting to coalesce around some sort of increase to the maximum per pupil amount or a maximum percent of state and federal funds for the enrichment levy, allowing districts to choose which route to go. No bills have been introduced yet.
 - The Washington Association of School Administrators released a [“hold harmless”](#) proposal for school districts they have identified as “going backwards” in basic education funding under the 2017 and 2018 McCleary “fixes.”
 - Close Special Education funding gaps
 - SB 5726 would increase the student multiplier from .96 to .98. The Senate education chair has indicated they likely would start with increasing the multiplier, as well as making the safety net more accessible as initial steps this session to close the funding gaps in special education.
 - 5532 would, among other elements, pay actual special education costs for schools with fewer than 1,000 students that exceed the 13.5% of student population cap on state funds for special education. The bill was heard in Senate education February 8.
 - Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - SB 5465 is the OSPI bill that would increase staffing ratios for school counselors, nurses, and family & community engagement coordinators. The bill received a mixed hearing February 8th. Clearly increasing school staffing is part of a theme being discussed this session. Odds are a set amount of money will be identified and the policy of how to phase in the funding will be set at that time.
 - Lower the High-Poverty LAP threshold to the state annual average of free or reduced price meal-eligible students to increase services to more students:
 - The policy in HB 1384 has been accepted but concerns about the fiscal note and trying to figure out how to soften the sharp thresholds have led House education members to develop two new bills. HB 1384 will not move out of committee, but the general policy lives on in the bills that will be sent directly to House Appropriations.

- Include a categorical allocation for high-mobility students.
 - Not likely this session.

Look for bills and committee hearings that relate to WSPTA’s “Also Supported Positions” adopted at Legislative Assembly and WSPTA resolutions below and in the Bill Tracking List.

WSPTA’s Week in Review

Members of Washington State PTA testified on the following bills this past week:

- Amy Ulrich, lead on the Best Practices for School Meals – Lunch position adopted last fall, [testified](#) in favor of HB 1472, which would direct OSPI to identify six demonstration sites to support a 20-minute seated lunch period. Amy’s testimony [was backed up by](#) gutsy Mark Milgrove, a Vancouver 3rd grader, and his mom Caressa Milgrove, a member of a Vancouver PTA.
- Due to snow on February 4, legislative consultant Marie Sullivan [testified](#) in support of HB 1216, the school safety bill, requesting an amendment to incorporate a parent/student reunification safety drill. The only amendment allowed on the bill as it moved out of committee is one includes school safety planning for family/student reunification. [Hear](#) bill sponsor Rep. Laurie Dolan, D-Olympia and Rep. Mike Steele, R-Chelan, on the amendment.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change)

Monday, February 11

1:30 p.m., House Education, HHR A – THIS HEARING HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO WEATHER

Public Hearing:

1. [HB 1130](#) - Addressing language access in public schools.
2. [HB 1184](#) - *Concerning school district elections. Simple majority for bonds*
3. [HB 1322](#) - Concerning dual language learning in early learning and K-12 education.
4. [HB 1425](#) - Concerning the definition of eligible pupil for purposes of the transitional bilingual instruction program.
5. [HB 1468](#) - Concerning bilingual educators.
6. [HB 1604](#) - Changing the Washington state center for childhood deafness and hearing loss to the Washington center for deaf and hard of hearing youth.
7. [HB 1623](#) - Concerning sign language interpreting in public schools.
8. [HJR 4203](#) - *Amending the Constitution to allow a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds.*

1:30 p.m., Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education, SHR 1 – THIS HEARING HAS BEEN POSTPONED DUE TO WEATHER

Public Hearing:

1. [SB 5512](#) - Concerning basic skills assessments for approved teacher preparation programs.

2. [SB 5576](#) - *Improving climate science education.*
3. [SB 5590](#) - Establishing school district depreciation subfunds for the purposes of preventative maintenance.
4. [SB 5593](#) - Addressing equity in access to dual credit opportunities.

Tuesday, February 12

3:30 p.m., House Education, HHR A – Assessment Day

Public Hearing:

1. [HB 1089](#) - *Concerning certificates of academic and individual achievement.*
2. [HB 1121](#) - *Concerning flexibility in high school graduation requirements.*
3. [HB 1314](#) - Concerning ethnic studies in public schools.
4. [HB 1599](#) - *Promoting career and college readiness through modified high school graduation requirements.*
5. [HB 1621](#) - Concerning basic skills assessments for approved teacher preparation programs.
6. [HB 1641](#) - *Concerning programs for highly capable students.*
7. [HB 1660](#) - Concerning the participation of students who are low income in extracurricular activities.
8. [HB 1685](#) - Concerning free or reduced-price meals for students.
9. [HB 1720](#) - *Reducing state assessment requirements to only those required for federal purposes in order to facilitate removal of inequitable barriers to students.*
10. [HB 1803](#) - Increasing the number of school districts that may be authorized to reduce the minimum number of required school days in a school year.

3:30 p.m., Senate Ways & Means, SHR 4

Public hearing:

1. [SSB 5116](#) - *Supporting Washington's clean energy economy and transitioning to a clean, affordable, and reliable energy future.*
2. [SSB 5115](#) - Concerning appliance efficiency standards.
3. [SSB 5323](#) - Reducing pollution from plastic bags by establishing minimum state standards for the use of bags at retail establishments.
4. [SSB 5259](#) - Encouraging the success of agriculture on agricultural land.
5. [SB 5550](#) - *Implementing the recommendations of the pesticide application safety work group.*

3:30 p.m., House Environment and Energy, HHR B

Public hearing:

1. [HB 1597](#) - Incorporating comprehensive measurements of greenhouse gas emissions from certain fossil fuels into state environmental laws.

3:30 p.m., House Commerce & Gaming, HHR C

Public hearing: [HB 1932](#) - Concerning vapor products.

Wednesday, February 13

1:30 p.m., Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education, SHR 1

Public Hearing:

1. [SB 5395](#) - *Concerning comprehensive sexual health education.*

2. [SB 5413](#) - Concerning the pipeline for paraeducators conditional scholarship program. (Hearing is on the Proposed Substitute.)
3. [SB 5574](#) - Concerning K-12 computer science education data.

Thursday, February 14

8 a.m., House Education, HHR A

Public hearing:

1. [HB 1163](#) - Concerning expanded learning opportunity programs.
2. [HB 1210](#) - Allowing nonresident children from military families to enroll in Washington's public schools prior to arrival in the state.
3. [HB 1304](#) - Concerning career and technical education in alternative learning experience programs.
4. [HB 1424](#) - Concerning access to state career and technical course equivalencies.
5. [HB 1475](#) - Establishing an educational grant program to promote confidence, public speaking, and leadership skills in students.
6. [HB 1577](#) - Concerning K-12 computer science education data.
7. [HB 1658](#) - Concerning paraeducators.
8. [HB 1714](#) - Concerning community and technical colleges granting high school diplomas.
9. [HB 1715](#) - Removing school districts' ability to withhold pupils' grades and transcripts.

3:30 p.m., Senate Ways & Means, SHR 1

Work session: School Construction

Public Hearing:

1. [SB 5853](#) - Regarding the school construction assistance program.
2. [SSB 5433](#) - Providing postsecondary education opportunities to enhance public safety.
3. [SSB 5393](#) - Establishing a statewide free college program by changing the state need grant to the Washington college promise scholarship.
4. [SSB 5477](#) - Requiring institutions of higher education to waive application fees for low-income students.

Olympia [Capitol Campus Map](#)

HHR refers to hearing rooms in the John L. O'Brien Building

SHR refers to hearing rooms in the John A. Cherberg Building