

February 17, 2019

Olympia digs out from the snow, first cutoff looms

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In unprecedented action, the Legislature cancelled committee meetings Monday, February 11, due to historic amounts of snow that had fallen since the previous Friday. Most Monday committee meetings were rescheduled for later in the week. On the 11th, many areas around Thurston County received one to two feet of snow, which closed schools, businesses, and knocked out power for thousands across the Puget Sound. Many legislators braved the snow to reach the Capitol, while others conducted meetings over the phone. Tuesday started with a two-hour delay, and then it was business as usual for the rest of the week.

Friday, February 22 marks the first of several self-imposed deadlines to winnow the list of bills under consideration this session. By the 22nd, policy bills need to have passed out of committee, either going to a budget committee for further review, or to the Rules Committee, a major gatekeeper for which bills get sent to the floor for possible action.

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

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - SB 5082 remains in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - The House Education Committee heard public testimony on simple majority for bonds on February 14th; all testimony was in support of HB 1184 and HJR 4203. Earlier in the week, the Senate education committee moved forward both the simple majority for bonds bill and a measure that would set the threshold at 55 percent; Chair Lisa Wellman said she thought it was appropriate for the entire Senate to debate the two competing concepts.
 - The Senate Ways & Means committee held a public hearing on SB 5853, which would phase in higher student space allocations starting in Fiscal Year 2022, and cost allocations starting in Fiscal Year 2026.
- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - WSPTA continues to sign in as support for measures before the legislature or look for opportunities to testify when aligned with the adopted position or national PTA positions.
- Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage:
 - HB 1139 remains in the House Appropriations Committee. A few bills related to paraeducators and encouraging paraeducators and others to enter a teacher prep program received hearings this past week.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.
 - On a party vote, Senate Democrats voted on a substitute to SB 5313, which would give districts a choice of a maximum per student amount of \$3,500 or the enrichment levy at

- 20 percent of the previous year's state and federal funding, put local effort assistance (LEA) at 10 percent, and let districts keep their LEA from 2019 if it less than the 10 percent for Calendar Year 2020. This would hold for one year. The House is considering a similar measure, but a per pupil maximum of \$3,000.
- As mentioned last week, 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." About 115 districts have been identified, and WASA is encouraging school districts to talk with their legislators to advocate for the funding in tandem with the levy fix.
 - Close Special Education funding gaps
 - SB 5736 is scheduled for a public hearing in Senate Ways & Means on February 20. The bill would increase the student multiplier from .96 to .98.
 - SB 5532, possibly as a substitute, will also be heard in the budget committee on the 20th, as will SB 5091, which would address changes to safety net calculations.
 - Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - No change on school staffing bills yet; bills have received a public hearing.
 - 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:
 - HB 1384 has been replaced by two different options:
 - HB 2029 is intended to allow a district that dips below the 50 percent threshold to use two to four years of data to help smooth out the funding;
 - HB 2073 would create a stair-step approach to extra funding, allowing districts with an eligibility of 50 percent to maintain the 1.1 hour per week generated for each FRPM student in the building, and reduce the generated hour to .7 for schools between 47.5 percent and 49.99 percent eligibility, and .4 for schools between 45 percent and 47.49 percent.
 - Include a categorical allocation for high-mobility students.
 - Bills continue to be introduced to help students who are homeless, Native American children, foster youth, and other high mobility students.

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:

- Sherry Rudolph pulled double duty on Valentine's Day, giving some love to simple majority for bonds in the House, and the proposed school construction assistance program increases in the Senate.
- Due to weather, legislative consultant Marie Sullivan testified on assessment bills in the House and signed in as Support on several issues related to the WSPTA platform, principles or Resolutions.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change)

Monday, February 18

1:30 p.m., House Education, HHR A

All executive action

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

Public hearing:

4. [SB 5689](#) - Concerning harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination in public schools.
5. [SB 5512](#) - Concerning basic skills assessments for approved teacher preparation programs.
6. [SB 5576](#) - Improving climate science education.
7. [SB 5590](#) - Establishing school district depreciation subfunds for the purposes of preventative maintenance.
8. [SB 5593](#) - Addressing equity in access to dual credit opportunities.

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

Public Hearing:

2. [SHB 1112](#) - Reducing greenhouse gas emissions from hydrofluorocarbons.

Tuesday, February 19

1:30 p.m., House Education, HHR A

Executive Action

1:30 p.m., House College & Workforce Development, HHR B

Public Hearing:

1. [HB 1851](#) - Creating the care worker research and resource center.
2. [HB 1942](#) - Increasing the availability of sexual assault nurse examiner education in rural and underserved areas.
3. [HB 2001](#) - Creating the Native American opportunity scholarship program.
4. [HB 1998](#) - Creating a task force on sexual violence at institutions of higher education.
5. [HB 1973](#) - Establishing the Washington dual enrollment scholarship pilot program.

Wednesday, February 20

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

Public Hearing:

1. [SB 5801](#) - Concerning teachers' postretirement employment options.
2. [SB 5736](#) - Concerning the funding allocation for special education programs.
3. [SB 5091](#) - Concerning state and federal special education funding. (If measure is referred to committee.)
4. [SB 5532](#) - Concerning special education. (If measure is referred to committee.)
5. [SSB 5141](#) - Concerning school resource officer mandatory training and policies.
6. [SSB 5317](#) - Concerning nonfirearm measures to increase school safety and student well-being.
7. [SB 5324](#) - Concerning support for students experiencing homelessness.
8. [SB 5851](#) - Enhancing educational opportunities for vulnerable children and youth using funding distributed from the Puget Sound taxpayer accountability account.

9. [SSB 5665](#) - Concerning the creation of a youth development work group within the department of children, youth, and families.
10. [SSB 5327](#) - *Expanding career connected learning opportunities.*

Thursday, February 21

8 a.m., House Education, HHR A

Executive Action

Friday, February 22

8 a.m., Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education, SHR 1

Possible executive action.

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