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Policy cutoff spells end to many bills, next up: fiscal cutoff

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In the first of what will be many self-imposed deadlines to keep the legislative process moving forward, Friday, February 22nd was the final day for most bills to be considered in policy committees. (I say *most*, since there are always exceptions!) Next week's schedule is full of House and Senate floor sessions in the mornings and budget committee meetings in the afternoons. Bills with a fiscal impact to the state must pass out of the fiscal committees (Senate Ways & Means, House Appropriations, Finance and Capital Budget) and the transportation committees by Friday, March 1st to remain under consideration.

And then there were four

Advancing from education committees this week on assessment/graduation changes were: a bill that would delink the requirement to pass the statewide assessments in English Language Arts (ELA) and math from graduation; a bill to extend the appeals waiver; and two bills that would delink but include different approaches to the “multiple pathways” requirement for students in the graduating classes of 2020.

- HB 1089 would completely decouple the link between passing the assessments and earning a diploma.
- SB 5146 would maintain the requirement for graduation and extend the expedited appeals waiver for students who don't pass the ELA and math assessments, starting with the graduating class of 2019. It would also set up a competency-based work group, address high school credit earned in middle school, and allow districts to waive two credits of the 24-credit diploma (but not in core subject areas) for individual circumstances.
- SB 5548 would delink the assessment, apply the waiver to the class of 2019 and, starting with the graduating class of 2020, require students to meet credit and district requirements and demonstrate college and career readiness through multiple pathways, including a testing or college-awarded credit track; complete a sequence of CTE courses that leads to workforce entry, state or nationally approved apprenticeships or postsecondary education; or achieving a certain score on the military exam. The main difference between SB 5548 and HB 1599 (below) is the lack of acceptance into college or going immediately into work based on a student's High School and Beyond Plan.
- HB 1599 would delink the assessment, apply the waiver to the class of 2019 and, starting with the graduating class of 2020, require students to meet credit and district requirements and demonstrate college and career readiness through multiple pathways, including a testing or college-awarded credit track; acceptance into an apprenticeship; admission to a college or university; passing the military exam; a job as it relates to a student's High School and Beyond Plan; or sequence of CTE courses.

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

The following bills have passed out of the policy committee and either been sent to a fiscal committee, are in the Rules Committee (which is where bills sit until they go to the floor), or on the House or Senate floor calendars and are eligible for a vote.

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - SSB 5082 remains in the Senate Ways & Means Committee. It received a public hearing February 7 and could use a nudge.
 - SHB 1479 has been sent to House Appropriations and hasn't been scheduled for a public hearing yet.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - SB 5066 and SJR 8201 will be heard in Senate Ways & Means on February 28th. The bills related to the 55% threshold failed to earn enough signatures in committee to pass. House bills on simple majority and the constitutional amendment died in the policy committee. According to sources, the House will wait to see if the Senate passes simple majority over or may wait until later in the session to pass the bills, since a simple majority could impact the capital budget.
 - Student space allocation and the cost formulas, SB 5853, would cost the state about 67% of its bonding capacity, according to information provided by non-partisan Senate committee staff. An amendment to scale back the bill is being considered.
- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - SHB 1010 would allow the Washington State Patrol to destroy firearms in its custody.
 - SHB 1068/SB 5062 would limit high capacity magazines.
 - SHB 1739 would establish criminal penalties applicable to undetectable firearms and untraceable firearms.
 - SB 5205 would address provisions governing firearms possession by persons who have been found incompetent to stand trial and who have a history of one or more violent acts.
- 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.
 - SHB 1621 would remove passing the state basic skills test as a pre-requisite for admission to a teacher preparation program. The bill is a PESB-request bill and part of a strategy to encourage more individuals of color or limited English language learners to enter a teacher preparation program. Assessments required to graduate and become a teacher are still in place.
 - SB 5801 would allow teachers who retire to return to limited work as mentors to teachers, an adviser to students in teacher preparation programs, or a counselor. The state school counselor's association asked for an amendment to clarify only retired counselors could return as counselors.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.

- SB 5313 is scheduled for a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee February 25. The bill would give districts a choice of a maximum per pupil amount of \$3,500 or an authorized levy of up to 20% of the previous year's state and federal funding. Local effort assistance would be maintained in calendar year 2020 at the same level as funded by the state in calendar year 2019, if less than 10% under the previous LEA formula.
- Close Special Education funding gaps
 - SB 5736 would increase the student multiplier from .96 to .98. It was heard February 20th and has a fiscal impact of about \$41 million for the biennium.
- Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - The Senate education committee passed SSB 5315, which would increase staffing ratios for school guidance counselors, nurses, social workers and psychologists in elementary, middle and high schools. The ratios would be phased in, starting with school districts at or above 50% free or reduced price meal ratios in 2019-21, and 35% in 2021-23 and all districts in 2023-25.
- 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 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.
 - Both bills are in House Appropriations and have not been scheduled for a hearing yet.
- 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:

- Northshore parent Corina Pfeil and her son Skyler Pfeil, also a PTA member, testified in favor of a bill that would require school districts to adopt a policy and procedures for transgender students, among other components. The bill passed out of the Senate education committee February 22nd.
- President Michelle Nims and Advocacy Director Nancy Chamberlain testified February 20 in the Senate Ways & Means Committee on bills related to increasing the special education multiplier; allowing retired teachers to re-enter the workforce as mentors and advisers; expanding career-

connected learning; and developing a regional approach to improve school safety and safety plans.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change)

Monday, February 25

1:30 p.m., Senate Ways & Means Committee, SHR 4

Public Hearing:

6. [SSB 5313](#) – Concerning school levies.

Thursday, February 28

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

Work session: Defining what constitutes a teacher’s work day.

1:30 p.m., Senate Ways & Means Committee, SHR 4

Public hearing:

2. [SJR 8201](#) - Amending the Constitution to allow a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds.
3. [SB 5066](#) - Concerning school district elections.

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