

March 24, 2019

Snow gives way to sun as legislative pace quickens

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Sunglasses, sandals and short sleeves graced the Capitol last week, as temperatures hit the mid-70s and snow piles in parking lots finally melted. Spring was in the air, and committees resumed action, scheduling full hearings of bills from the opposite chamber. Even the magnolia tree outside the bill room was sporting buds! In the education committees, the topics of assessments, teacher shortages, CTE, school meals and special education were at the top of list. In the fiscal committees, levies and school construction brought people to Olympia to testify.

The latest Senate levy proposal, proposed [substitute 5313](#), had a [public hearing](#) March 21st, with some speakers in favor and others with concerns. The proposal would try a different approach than the previous levy proposal:

- Districts would have a choice of \$2.50/\$1,000 assessed value or a per pupil maximum of \$2,500 (districts with fewer than 9,600 students) or \$3,000 (districts with 9,600 or more students) – whichever is less;
- Local effort assistance (LEA) would increase to \$2,100; and
- An LEA hold harmless clause would be in place for Calendar Year 2020, to ensure no school district would get less LEA under the new levy authority structure during the 2019-20 school year.

Senate Ways & Means Committee members asked questions during the hearing; it wasn't clear if Chair Christine Rolfes will move the bill forward or hold for further refinements. Staff released [charts](#) to show the impact on the state's 295 school districts for CY2020 and CY 2021. (Look under the SCS tab for the charts.)

In the House Capital Budget, bill sponsor Sen. Jamie Pedersen, D-Seattle, explained the need for his school construction assistance bill, [ESSB 5853](#), which would start increasing the student space allocation from 90 square feet/student to 110 square feet in FY22 (July 1, 2021), 120 square feet in FY23, and 130 square feet in FY24. The bill also would set an artificial limit on the size of the SCAP as part of the overall budget, with the limit 30 percent of the total state general obligation bond appropriations. While most speakers were in favor of the legislation, which would boost funding for one of the formula levers, the limit on the state's bonding capacity drew some concerns and requests to remove the cap or change the requirement to "may." In the past the House Capital Budget committee hasn't been very interested in this Senate bill, but it is a start and may be viewed as a step forward this year – minus the 30 percent cap.

Budget week begins

The big news for next week is the House will be releasing all three of their budgets on Monday at noon: operating, capital and transportation. The House Appropriations Committee will take public testimony at 3:30 PM on Monday, March 25, act on amendments March 27, and vote it out of the House on March 29. The other budgets also will have public hearings and committee action, and it's possible the transportation budget will have floor action March 30. The capital budget is expected to be voted on next month. House revenue ideas are expected to start trickling out, as budget writers share how they will pay for new programs and projects in their spending plans. The Senate, for its part, is reported to plan to release operating and capital budgets March 29.

Like the sunny daffodils, revenue is up

Although the revenue forecast for the current fiscal year and future fiscal years is up, House and Senate Democrats continue to point to charts that show the new revenue doesn't keep pace with existing budget requirements and legal obligations. A few more revenue ideas are emerging in the Senate, with [SB 5991](#) the latest: a graduated real estate excise tax (REET) based on real estate sales price. For properties selling below \$250,000, the REET percentage would decrease; for properties that sell between \$250,000 and \$1 million, the REET would stay at the current level; and for properties selling at \$1 million or more, the REET percentage would increase. The revenue generated by this proposal would be dedicated in large part to education funding.

Taking a different approach to the revenue forecast, House Republican Leader JT Wilcox [shared his views](#), while Senator John Braun, the ranking Republican on the Senate budget committee, offered his [analysis](#), with both stating new revenue is sufficient to meet the existing policy and spending requirements.

Graduation requirement discussions continue

High stakes tests continue to be a discussion point, with the Senate education committee hearing from an array of speakers on [E2SHB 1599](#). The bill would remove the requirement to pass the Smarter Balanced assessments in English Language Arts and Math to earn a diploma and replace it with a "multiple pathways" approach, starting with the Class of 2020. The requirement for passing the science exam is also delinked.

It looks like amendments requested by WSPTA (and others) will be offered next week when the bill gets a vote out of committee. These include amendments: to extend the expedited appeals waiver through the class of 2021; change the requirement to do a "sequence" of CTE courses to CTE courses "relevant" to a student's proposed pathway; review the pathways to include other options in the future; and allow the use of existing High School and Beyond Plan software as long as it can be modified to offer the same information requirements and functionality of the legislation.

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

The following bills are still under consideration:

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - SSB 5082 is scheduled for a vote in House Education March 28st. The bill has been targeted by some groups concerned about its impact, so emails and phone calls to House legislators are encouraged.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - See above for the conversation ESSB 5853.
- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - Several bills of interest are scheduled for a hearing next week.
- Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage:
 - HB 1139, the comprehensive approach to teacher shortage, had a public hearing in the Senate education committee March 18th with everyone in support.
 - SHB 1621 had a public hearing March 18th, also with overwhelming support.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.
 - See above on the proposed substitute to SB 5313.
 - HB 2140 is the House bill for levies; we are likely to see a proposal next week.
 - Close Special Education funding gaps
 - 2SSB 5091 would raise the funding multiplier for students with disabilities from .9609 to 1.0. The bill had a public hearing in the House education committee and is scheduled for executive action on Wednesday.
 - Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - No change from last week.
 - 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: No bills are still alive.

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

Bellevue parent Amy Ulrich pulled a double shift on Monday, March 18, [testifying in favor of HB 1272](#), the seated lunch/school meals bill she helped bring to last fall's Legislative Assembly, [and on HB 1139](#), the teacher shortage bill.

Seattle parent Andy Jensen [delivered the WSPTA messages](#) on SB 5853, the school construction bill.

Tacoma grandparent and retired Highline School District principal and teacher Michael McSweeney testified in both the [Senate education committee](#) regarding WSPTA requested amendments on the high school assessments bill and [in support of SB 5410](#), a bill that would require colleges and universities to award college credit for a score of 4 or higher on the

standard level or higher level International Baccalaureate exams or for an E on the Cambridge exam. Last year's bill didn't place the scores in statute in parity with a 2017 bill that put a 3 on an Advanced Placement exam in statute. This would remedy that issue. Directions from the chairs in both committees were to keep remarks very short and not repeat what had been said before.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change)

Monday, March 25

Noon – House operating, capital and transportation budgets released (use [LEAP website](#) to review)

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

Public hearing:

1. [E2SHB 1660](#) - Concerning the participation of students who are low income in extracurricular activities.
2. [SHB 1715](#) - Removing school districts' ability to withhold pupils' grades and transcripts.
3. [ESHB 1813](#) - Incorporating the costs of employee health benefits into school district contracts for pupil transportation.
4. [HB 2040](#) - Concerning nonhigh school districts.

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

Public hearing:

1. [SSB 5354](#) - Concerning programs for highly capable students.
2. [SSB 5612](#) - Concerning Holocaust education.
3. [SB 5263](#) - Concerning school bus driver requirements.
4. [SB 5088](#) - Awarding credits for computer science.
5. [ESSB 5389](#) - Establishing a telehealth training and treatment program to assist youth.
6. [SB 5731](#) - Concerning petitions for proposed transfer of school district territory.
7. [ESSB 5874](#) - Funding rural satellite skill centers

3:30 p.m., House Appropriations, HHR A

Public hearing:

1. [HB 1109](#) - Making 2019-2021 biennium operating appropriations.

*The hearing will be on the proposed substitute bill by Representative Ormsby, which will be available online on March 25, 2019, at noon at

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2019/ho1921p.asp>

Tuesday, March 26

8 a.m., House Capital Budget, HHR B

Public Hearing: [HB 1102](#) - Concerning the capital budget.

*The hearing will be on the proposed substitute bill by Representatives Tharinger and DeBolt, which will be available online Monday, March 25, 2019, at noon at

<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2019/hc1921p.asp> (2019-21 Biennial Budget) and
<http://leap.leg.wa.gov/leap/budget/detail/2019/hc2019p.asp> (2019 Supplemental

3:30 p.m., House Education, HHR A

Executive Session:

1. [SSB 5023](#) - Concerning ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students.
2. [E2SSB 5091](#) - Concerning state and federal special education funding.
3. [SSB 5324](#) - Concerning support for students experiencing homelessness.
4. [SSB 5532](#) - Concerning special education.
5. [SSB 5593](#) - Addressing equity in access to dual credit opportunities.

Wednesday, March 27

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

Public hearing:

1. [SHB 1095](#) - Concerning the administration of marijuana to students for medical purposes.
2. [HB 1120](#) - Updating the term essential academic learning requirements to state learning standards to reflect current terminology.
3. [SHB 1151](#) - Modifying education reporting requirements.
4. [SHB 1210](#) - Allowing nonresident children from military families to enroll in Washington's public schools prior to arrival in the state.

Thursday, March 28

8 a.m., House Education, HHR A

Executive Session:

1. [SSB 5023](#) - Concerning ethnic studies materials and resources for public school students.
2. [SSB 5324](#) - Concerning support for students experiencing homelessness.
3. [SSB 5593](#) - Addressing equity in access to dual credit opportunities.
4. [E2SSB 5091](#) - Concerning state and federal special education funding.
5. [SSB 5532](#) - Concerning special education.

1:30 p.m., House Capital Budget, HHR B

Possible Executive Session:

1. [HB 1101](#) - Concerning state general obligation bonds and related accounts.
2. [HB 1102](#) - Concerning the capital budget.

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