

April 7, 2019

Legislature starts final four: last weeks of session, that is

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With only four weeks left in the 105-day regular session, lawmakers worked late into the evening in some committees and on the floor, passing out policy and budget bills to meet various deadlines and get budgets into negotiations. The cutoff for policy bills to pass the “opposite chamber” committees was April 3rd. Tuesday the 9th is the day bills must pass out of fiscal committees to stay under consideration this session. The exceptions, of course, are bills necessary to implement the budget.

On an interesting note, House Appropriations Chair Timm Ormsby, D-Spokane, announced at the beginning of the Friday, April 5th meeting that he would not hold additional public hearings beyond the Saturday hearing, which started at 9 AM and ended around 5:45 PM. Unless he changes his mind, that means bills that haven’t received a public hearing in House Appropriations might be dead for the session.

Falling victim to last week’s policy deadline were:

- SB 5393, which would have rolled the State Need Grant into a larger program under the Governor’s college “promise” bill (but the concept lives on in HB 2158);
- SB 5395, which would have required school districts to teach sexual health education in all grades; and
- SB 5434, which would have prohibited possession of firearms on the premises of any licensed child care center, child care center provided-transportation, or other child care center facility.

After a marathon meeting that lasted from Tuesday afternoon into Wednesday morning, the Senate Ways & Means Committee struck the operating budget language that had passed the House the previous week and considered more than 100 amendments before finally passing out their version of [ESHB 1109](#). The two-year spending plan went to the floor April 4th and passed the Senate 31-17. With that action, the bill will now go into negotiations between the two chambers and operating budget negotiators.

Also passing the House last week were the 2019-21 capital budget and accompanying bond authorization bill. [SHB 1102](#) passed the House 94-0, was immediately scheduled for public hearing in the Senate budget committee and passed to the Senate floor for action next week.

Levy bills pass budget committees

During that late-night executive session, the Senate Ways & Means committee also took action on [2SSB 5313](#), the levy authorization bill. Under the adopted substitute, school districts with

40,000 or more students would be given a levy lid of \$2.50 per \$1,000 assessed value or \$3,000 per student, whichever is less. School districts with fewer than 40,000 students would get a levy lid lift of \$2.50 per \$1,000 assessed value or \$2,500 per student, whichever is less.

Two amendments were adopted to the Senate-proposed levy policy: a limit on salary growth related to supplemental contracts, and the phase-in of “enrichment-like” state funding for charter schools. Senator Lisa Wellman, D-Mercer Island, who is the bill sponsor, publicly rejected both amendments, and said she will work for their removal when the bill comes to the Senate floor.

During Saturday, April 6 deliberations, the House Appropriations Committee passed out of committee a levy proposal that would give districts a choice: the lesser of \$3,000 per student or \$1.50 per \$1,000 assessed value OR authority for 20 percent of the district’s state and federal levy base of the prior school year. For most districts, local effort assistance (LEA) would be 10 percent of the levy base. However, an amendment offered by Covington Democrat Pat Sullivan would increase the LEA percentage to 12 percent in districts with 70 percent free and reduced-price meals enrollment. The Sullivan amendment also removed the portions of the bill related to special education and paraeducators. During the April 6th hearing, lawmakers heard public testimony on [E2SSB 5091](#), the special education bill that would increase the multiplier used to determine additional funding for students receiving special education services.

Voting against SHB 2140, Republican budget leader Drew Stokesbary, Auburn, raised three issues, including whether poverty eligibility was a good tool for awarding additional levy equalization funding. The bill passed out of committee with Democrats voting yes, and Republicans voting no.

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

The following bills are still under consideration:

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- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - [2SSB 5082](#) had a public hearing Saturday, April 6. The bill’s fiscal note has grown to \$1 million for implementation, which could be a challenge for passage.
 - The bill is scheduled for executive action April 8. An amendment offered by Rep. Mike Steele, R-Chelan, would change the requirement for OSPI to “adopt” the SEL framework to “approve.” It would also strike the language directing OSPI to align the programs it oversees with the SEL standards and integrate the SEL standards where appropriate, an issue raised in testimony.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - Simple majority is dead for the session.
 - [ESSB 5853](#) addresses the School Construction Assistance Program and begins to phase in a higher student space allocation starting July 1, 2021. The bill had a public

hearing in the House Capital Budget committee, but it isn't clear if Chair Steve Tharinger, D-Dungeness, will move the bill out.

- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - A Republican-sponsored bill to clarify background checks for concealed pistol license holders passed the House unanimously.
- Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage:
 - [E2SHB 1139](#), the comprehensive approach to teacher shortage had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee.
 - [SHB 1621](#) would break down barriers getting into teacher preparation programs. The bill is in Senate Rules.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.
 - See above description of 2SSB 5313 and SHB 2140.
 - Close Special Education funding gaps
 - [2SSB 5091](#) was heard in House Appropriations on Saturday. As passed the Senate, the bill would raise the funding multiplier for students with disabilities from .9609 to 1.0.
 - The bill is scheduled for executive action Monday, April 8.
 - An amendment offered by Rep. Laurie Dolan, D-Olympia, would create a two-tiered system, changing the multiplier to 1.0 for special education students spending 80% or more of their time in a general education classroom and .9823 for special education students spending less than 80% of their time in the general education classroom.
 - An amendment offered by Rep. Michelle Caldier, R-Port Orchard, would increase the multiplier to 1.07 and would remove the 13.5% limit on the percentage of funding for students in special education. The amendment also would state that school district cost differences due to best practical efforts to support IEPs or to meet goals of including students in the least restrictive environment are a legitimate basis for safety net awards and consistent with legislative intent.
 - Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - The House operating budget would fund increased guidance counselor ratios for 20 schools.
 - 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

Everett PTSA Council Advocacy Chair Lizzie Sebring [testified in favor](#) of E2SHB 1139, the comprehensive approach to recruiting and retaining professional educators, after waiting nearly 5.5 hours! (Gold stars Lizzie!!!) The bill was before the Senate Ways & Means Committee on April 5. The House budget includes funding for various scholarships, stipends and mentoring programs.

The Week Ahead (Schedule subject to change | [Bill links found here](#))

Monday, April 8

9 a.m., House Appropriations, HHR A

Executive session:

- [2SSB 5082](#) - Promoting and expanding social emotional learning.
- [E2SSB 5091](#) - Concerning state and federal special education funding.
- [2SSB 5903](#) - Concerning children's mental health.
- [E2SSB 5116](#) - Supporting Washington's clean energy economy and transitioning to a clean, affordable, and reliable energy future.

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

Public hearing:

- [SB 5961](#) - Improving the equity and sustainability of Washington's tax structure. (Hearing is on the Proposed Substitute.)
- [SHB 2108](#) - Concerning state funding for K-3 class sizes in schools.
- [E2SHB 1599](#) - Promoting career and college readiness through modified high school graduation requirements.

Executive Session:

- [2SHB 1216](#) - Concerning non-firearm measures to increase school safety and student well-being.

Tuesday, April 9 – Fiscal policy cutoff

10 a.m., Senate Ways & Means, SHR 4

Public hearing:

- [2SHB 1272](#) - Concerning school lunch durations.
- [ESHB 1998](#) - Creating a task force on sexual violence at institutions of higher education.

Executive action to be determined

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