

April 21, 2019

It's the final countdown

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The Legislature has one week left in the regular 105-day session and odds are against them finishing on time. In fact, lawmakers haven't ended a regular budget session on time since 2009, when the state was facing serious cuts to programs to make ends meet. That isn't the story this year, when more than \$4 billion in new revenue is projected over the next four years. However, majority Democrats say the revenue growth isn't keeping pace with current expenditures and that more funding is needed to meet obligations, including a settlement over individuals who need mental health services not jail time.

Both the House and Senate have bills that would raise revenues and several of the concepts are starting to share the same language. The Washington Research Council offered a [good summary](#) of Senate Ways & Means Committee action. The House Finance Committee took action on their mainstays: [SHB 2156](#) (for education, graduated REET And capital gains tax); [SHB 2157](#) (repealing or changing tax preferences, includes the Tax Structure Work Group); and [SHB 2158](#) (focused on workforce development and increasing access to the State Need Grant through an increased B&O tax on professional services). The House Appropriations Committee will meet Monday for public hearing and action on HB 2157 and HB 2158.

Last Wednesday, April 17, was the deadline for bills to pass out of the opposite chamber to stay under consideration. While the House adjourned around 5 PM without much fanfare, for the 20 minutes leading up to the cutoff, the Senate was embroiled in [multiple efforts to delay action](#) on [EHB 1638](#), the bill that would remove the personal/philosophical objection to vaccinations for measles, mumps and rubella. That bill eventually passed the Senate after two hours and 16 debated (and rejected) amendments.

Starting the next day, legislators began voting on “concurrence lists,” which is a vote in agreement with changes made in the other chamber or “bills in dispute,” which is when they disagree. In the case of disagreement, legislators can ask that the opposite chambers' amendments be removed, and the bill passed without changes or they can ask for a conference committee to settle disputes. During conference committee, it is possible to make full-scale changes to a bill, with the conference report only allowing House and Senate members to vote Yes or No on the final bill.

Several bills failed to pass the Wednesday cutoff, including:

- SHB 1039 would have required opioid overdose medication in high schools and colleges and universities. It is possible this bill will get added to a substance abuse bill that has gone to conference.

- E2SHB 1660 would have required data collection and reduced-price fees for extracurricular activities for low-income students.
- ESHB 1813 would have required contracted service employers of school districts for transportation to offer health care benefits and pensions like school districts. With all the discussions about the health benefits program for school employees, it is possible this concept may find its way into another bill.
- ESHB 1998 would have created a task force on sexual violence at state colleges and universities. The bill is likely to end up as a budget proviso.

In addition to taking up the revenue bills on Monday, House Appropriations will hold a public hearing and take action on [HB 2163](#). The bill would direct \$58.4 million from the budget stabilization account to the general fund for school districts; this concept was added on the House floor when the 2019-21 operating budget was passed. The bill is a House demonstration of funding support for about 83 districts in a “hold harmless” effort for changes between the 2017-18 school year and 2018-19 school year.

A couple of issues WSPTA has actively worked on this year are nearing the finish line:

- [HB 1599](#). The Senate education and budget committees made a few changes to the bill, which would remove the single requirement to pass the statewide Smarter Balanced Assessment in ELA and math to earn a diploma and replace it with a requirement to complete one of seven pathways. Students in the classes of 2019 and 2020 will be able to use the [expedited appeals waiver](#) that has been available in 2017 and 2018. According to House sources, the House plans to concur with the changes and send the bill to the Governor’s desk.
- [SB 5410](#). The bill requires state colleges and universities to develop a systemwide approach to awarding college credit for scores of 3 on AP exams and 4 on IB exams. The House removed the data reporting requirements and made a technical change to Cambridge-level exam titles, so the bill will return to the Senate for concurrence.

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

The following bills are still under consideration:

- Social and Emotional Learning:
 - [2SSB 5082](#) passed the House with changes on April 10. It will return to the Senate for concurrence.
- School Construction and Simple Majority for Bonds:
 - Simple majority is dead for the session.
 - [ESSB 5853](#) is considered dead.
- Preventing Gun Violence:
 - The Senate or House passed several bills before the April 17th deadline, including:
 - EHB 1465, concerning pistol sales or transfers;
 - SHB 1739, addressing undetectable and untraceable guns;

- SHB 1949 would examine the feasibility of a single firearm background check system;
 - SB 5205, concerning provisions governing firearms possession by persons found incompetent to stand trial; and
 - SB 5027, concerning extreme risk protection orders.
- Strategies to Address the Teacher Shortage:
 - [E2SHB 1139](#), passed the Senate; House bill sponsor Sharon Tomiko Santos was debating whether to concur with changes made in the Senate or ask the Senate to recede.
 - [SHB 1621](#) passed the Senate and has been delivered to the Governor.
- Strategic K-12 Investments to Close Gaps:
 - Levies: Allow school district choice.
 - No changes to either bill (SB 5313, HB 2140). The latest news is that Senate will try to bring its bill to the floor for action and then enter negotiations. However, the Senate needs 25 votes to pass the measure, and it is unclear if it has 25 votes to move it forward. HB 2140 remains in House Rules.
 - Close Special Education funding gaps
 - [2SSB 5091](#) was modified in House Appropriations, with a two-tiered approach added at the request of OSPI. As drafted, the multiplier would increase 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. The bill is on the House floor calendar.
 - Rep. Drew Stokesbary, R-Auburn, has an [amendment](#) that would add the entirety of SB 5332, as it passed the House Education Committee, to the bill.
 - Rep. Michelle Caldier, R-Gig Harbor, has an [amendment](#) to remove the tiered approach and the 13.5% cap and increase the multiplier to 1.07.
 - Increase prototypical school funding to Initiative 1351 levels to improve student well-being:
 - No bill is alive at this time; several “title only” bills have been introduced.
 - 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

WSPTA sent an Action Alert for members to use in support of delaying the K-3 class size ratio compliance by one year. Nearly 90 individuals sent emails to senators; if you didn’t respond, please consider an email early in the week.

The Week Ahead

Monday, April 22

1:30 PM, House Appropriations, HHR A

Public Hearing:

1. [SHB 1708](#) - Concerning recreational fishing and hunting licenses.
2. [SHB 1873](#) - Concerning the taxation of vapor products as tobacco products.
3. [HB 2157](#) - Updating the Washington tax structure to address the needs of Washingtonians. (If measure is referred to committee.)
4. [HB 2158](#) - Creating a workforce education investment to train Washington students for Washington jobs. (If measure is referred to committee.)
5. [HB 2159](#) - Making expenditures from the budget stabilization account for declared catastrophic events.
6. [HB 2163](#) - Transferring extraordinary revenue growth from the budget stabilization account for K-12 education.

Possible Executive Session:

1. [SHB 1708](#) - Concerning recreational fishing and hunting licenses.
2. [SHB 1873](#) - Concerning the taxation of vapor products as tobacco products.
3. [HB 2157](#) - Updating the Washington tax structure to address the needs of Washingtonians. (If measure is referred to committee.)
4. [HB 2158](#) - Creating a workforce education investment to train Washington students for Washington jobs. (If measure is referred to committee.)
5. [HB 2159](#) - Making expenditures from the budget stabilization account for declared catastrophic events.
6. [HB 2163](#) - Transferring extraordinary revenue growth from the budget stabilization account for K-12 education.
7. [SSB 5734](#) - Concerning the hospital safety net assessment.

Most of the action in committees is completed. The exceptions will be bills linked to the budget, often called “trailer” bills or those necessary to implement the budget. In addition, it is possible that bills that died will be traded or brought forward in the last days of session.

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