

February 29, 2020

Leaping into the last two weeks!

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Both the House and Senate released proposed supplemental operating, capital and transportation budgets on February 24. Usually one chamber will release a budget proposal, and the following week the other chamber will release its budget proposal. But this 60-day session is anything but usual – in terms of the number of bills under consideration, the pace of session, and the budget releases.

After a public hearing on February 24, the Senate Ways & Means committee proceeded to take executive action on the supplemental operating budget on February 25 and the Senate passed ESSB 6168 off the Senate floor on Thursday by a vote of 33-16. The House caught the bill on the fly, placed it on the House floor calendar on February 28, and amended the Senate budget with their version (which had passed out of the House Appropriations Committee on February 26). The House considered two additional supplemental budget “strikers,” both of which had amendments added on the floor and then were voted down by the body. Eventually, the bill passed the House 55-39.

The next step for ESSB 6168 is to move behind closed doors for negotiations to bring funding prioritized by both chambers into alignment and agree to a final supplemental operating budget. The negotiations are usually over items that were not in both budgets but were a priority for one chamber.

The week also was a busy one because February 28 was the deadline to have bills from the opposite chamber voted out of policy committees. This resulted in the list of bills under consideration to be further winnowed. House and Senate budget committees met Saturday to hear and act on bills with a fiscal impact; the cutoff for bills to pass fiscal committees is Monday, March 2. And the last major deadline is March 6, for bills to have passed out of the opposite chamber. The exception to the cutoff rules are bills “necessary to implement the budget,” although either chamber can revive a bill that has failed to make previous deadlines.

WSPTA Legislative Priorities (all bills may be accessed [here](#))

Policy

- [Preventing Gun Violence](#). The list of bills related to the preventing gun violence platform is narrowing. Still alive are:
 - SHB 1010 would allow the Washington State Patrol to destroy confiscated weapons.
 - E2SHB 2467 would establish a centralized single point of contact background check system for firearms transfers.

- SHB 2555 would require a licensed firearm dealer to conduct a background check on applicants for the purchase or transfer of a firearm frame or receiver once a state firearms background check system is established within the Washington State Patrol.
- SHB 2622 would establish compliance hearing processes with contempt of court procedures for orders to surrender and extreme risk protection orders.
- EHB 2623 would make possessing a firearm unlawful if a person has a prior conviction for, or is found not guilty by reason of insanity of, unlawful aiming or discharge of a firearm or dangerous weapon, or animal cruelty in the second degree.
- HB 2947 has a 400-word title that would ban the manufacture, possession or distribution of large capacity magazines (15 or more rounds) and would mandate the Washington State Patrol establish a magazine buy-back program.
- [Screening for Highly Capable Students.](#)
 - SB 5354 died at the February 19 cutoff and will not be considered this session.
- Protecting students from immigration issues (Resolution 18.25)
 - SB 5834 failed to pass out of the House Education Committee due to lack of time. It is possible elements that have a fiscal impact could be placed in the supplemental operating budget.

Budget

- [Paraeducator funding, \\$26 million.](#) Operating budget proposals would fund two days in the current biennium (2019-20 school year and 2020-21 school year), and fund four days in the fundamental course of study starting in the 2021-23 biennium (and the 2021-22 school year). This is a win!
- Dyslexia funding (Resolution 18.32). The bills related to this issue died, but the House operating budget includes \$811,000 for development of training modules for screening and professional learning on the modules.
- [LEA funding](#) All bills that would have modified the \$1,550 cap on LEA have died. With property values increasing, LEA is also expected to decline in the current budget. The good news here is that more than 120 school districts with levies that were stagnant but had higher than expected assessed value will receive funding for Calendar Year 2020 to fill the gap in less LEA.
- [Student safety and well-being](#) and support for a behavioral health specialist at each Educational Service District (ESD). Both supplemental operating budgets included funding to support one behavioral health specialist per ESD (aligned with HB 1216, 2019 session).
- Strategic investments in K-12 Education to Close Gaps:
 - The Senate supplemental operating budget includes \$9.6 million for an increase in the special education multiplier and \$11 million more for the safety net, which supports very high-cost students.

- The House supplemental operating budget includes .5 of a school counselor for high-poverty schools (50% or higher students qualify for free and reduced price meals) and elementary schools with at least 600 students and a 45 FRPM eligibility. The Senate does not include this funding in its budget proposal.
- [Capital budget: seismic retrofits](#) The capital budgets include \$15 million for seismic studies.

Other bills of interest still moving:

- HB 1182 would allow Learning Assistance Program (LAP) funds to be used to support a school-wide behavioral health system of supports and interventions, including hiring social workers, counselors, instructional aids, and other school-based health professionals, and removes the requirement to use LAP first on literacy in grades K-4.
- HB 1272 would require OSPI to designate six public elementary schools as demonstration sites to ensure students have a seated lunch duration of at least 20 minutes and would direct WSSDA to update model policies and procedures. The bill passed out of the Senate education committee and had a public hearing on February 29. It is scheduled for executive action on Monday, March 2nd. NOTE: **WSPTA members are encouraged to write to members of the [Senate Ways & Means Committee](#) and urge them to pass this bill out of committee.**
- SB 5389 would authorize four telehealth pilots in school districts. The bill passed the House Education committee and is in the House Appropriations Committee.
- HB 2660 would require districts with 62.5% of “identified students” to provide meals at no cost to all students through the federal Community Eligibility Provision. The bill passed the Senate education committee and had a public hearing in the Senate Ways & Means Committee February 29.
- SB 6117 would increase the special education multiplier for students who are in general education classrooms 80% or more of their time. It is likely this is the only K-12 education funding for 2020. Both budgets included funding for the special education multiplier. The Senate operating budget includes \$9.6 million for the multiplier and \$11 million for the safety net.
- SB 6521 would create a pilot program for mastery-based education (i.e., tying advancement to knowledge and not seat time, and removing the funding disincentive).

Bills that are dead at cutoff (floor action or opposite chamber policy committee)

- HB 1278 would have required public higher education institutions that offer on-campus housing options to provide a waiver for one year of on-campus housing, on a space available basis, to first-year College Bound Scholarship students who are homeless.
- HB 1860 would have created requirements for testing lead in water in schools.
- HB 2240 and SB 6077 were the original high-capacity magazine limits bills.
- HB 2583 would have required school districts to transport students when their place of residency changes.

- HB 2844 would have addressed health issues for students with seizure disorders. A budget proviso to study this issue was included in the House operating budget.
- HB 2865 would have directed OSPI to develop a guide for families that outlined ways to help their children be prepared for kindergarten, and would have required certain state agencies to annually provide the guide to certain households with three and four-year-old children and licensed child care providers. It would have required the information to be in the 10 most-spoken languages.
- SB 5607 would have expanded the dual language learning program.
- SB 5908 would have created a racial equity and cultural competency training program for school employees.
- SB 6132 would have created flexibility within the Learning Assistance Program (LAP). Many of the elements of this bill were added to HB 1182, which is still alive in the Senate.
- SB 6138 would have encouraged mentor programs for beginning teachers to use mentors of color when possible.
- SB 6141 would have changed dates regarding reporting by the dyslexia work group.
- SB 6262 would have required school districts to teach Washington’s tribal history, culture, and government.
- SB 6480 would have created a definition of school counselor and required school districts to develop school counselor plans.
- SB 6563 would have given school districts the authority to have school-based health centers on school grounds.
- SB 6294 would have changed concealed pistol license training requirements.

The previous week

- President Janice Kutzera testified on the House and Senate operating budget proposals. She stressed the need for full funding of four days of training for paraeducators and the need to fund the dyslexia screening modules and training. Both budgets have clarified that four days will be in ongoing budgets, and \$811,000 was added through amendment by Rep. Gerry Pollet, D-46, after Kutzera’s testimony.
- Kate Dillon Levin testified in favor of HB 2947, the new bill to limit high capacity magazines.
- Heidi Bennett testified in favor of SB 5834, which would require school districts to adopt policies and procedures to protect student information related to immigration status.

Look for bills and committee hearings that relate to the above-listed issues, Top 5, and WSPTA’s “Also Supported Positions” in the Week Ahead and Bill Tracking List.

The Week Ahead *(Schedule subject to change, all bills can be found through this [link](#))*

As mentioned, Monday March 2, is the deadline for bills to pass out of fiscal committees. The list of bills they will be considering is everchanging. Here is what has been posted as of February 29, 2020:

Monday, March 2

Ways & Means (Senate) - SHR 4, JACB - 3/2 @ 10:00am

- E2SHB 1272 - Exec Session - Concerning school lunch durations.
- E2SHB 2467 - Exec Session - Establishing a centralized single point of contact background check system for firearms transfers.
- SHB 2555 - Exec Session - Concerning background check requirements for firearms classified as other under federal firearms laws.
- ESHB 2660 - Exec Session - Increasing the availability of school meals provided to public school students at no student cost.
- 2SHB 2737 - Exec Session - Updating the children's mental health work group.
- 2SHB 2864 - Exec Session - Establishing a running start summer school pilot program.
- SSB 6254 - Exec Session - Protecting public health and safety by enhancing the regulation of vapor products.
- SSB 6512 - Exec Session - Providing housing to school district employees.

Transportation (Senate) - SHR 1, JACB - 3/2 @ 1:30pm

- E2SHB 1110 - Public Hearing - Reducing the greenhouse gas emissions associated with transportation fuels.
- SHB 1256 - Exec Session - Increasing monetary penalties for the unlawful use of a personal electronic device while driving a motor vehicle in a school, playground, or crosswalk speed zone.

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