

January 10, 2022

2022 Session Starts under Virtual Protocols

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Get your computers out, turn your light filters on, and update your virtual platform subscriptions. For the second year in a row, the Legislature will begin a formal regular session using protocols that allow only a few legislators to be on the House and Senate floor at a time and 100 percent virtual committee hearings and caucus meetings.

With the omicron variant spreading across the state, last week House and Senate Democrats adopted updated rules for the conduct of business. The goal, shared by legislative leadership, is to reassess frequently and adjust the limits when possible.

When the gavel falls at noon Monday, January 10, to start the 60-day session, here is a summary of the protocols:

- All committee meetings will be virtual. (This will not change.)
- The public is not allowed in the chamber corridors, offices, or galleries.
- In the Senate, floor action will be limited to 8 Democrats and 7 Republicans on the floor daily.
- In the House, floor action will be limited to 2 Democrats and 2 Republicans on the floor daily.
- Regarding COVID testing, legislators and staff will be required to test multiple times per week, and legislators who plan to be on the floor will have to test daily.

What to expect in 2022

This is the second year of the biennium, which means that the session is shorter, compressing the schedule significantly. (All bills that weren't enacted are eligible for action again this year, and more than 600 bills have been pre-filed and were introduced on Day 1!) Keep in mind that only about 10 percent of bills introduced make it across the finish line. We all will be breathing a huge sigh of relief at the first deadline for bills to pass out of policy committees on February 3, and from fiscal committees by February 7.

Rather than writing brand new budgets, legislators will adjust the operating, capital, and transportation budgets based on emergent needs and new priorities. With the rosy November 2021 revenue report forecasting nearly \$900 million in new and projected revenues for the current biennium (ends June 30, 2023) and another projected \$965 million for the 2023-25 biennium, not to mention \$1 billion in federal funding set aside last year, the state is fairly flush with cash. While that's a good place to be, it also has its own challenges – priorities vary among not just the two chambers but each of the caucuses.

Governor Jay Inslee submitted his proposed budgets mid-December. Lawmakers will take public testimony on those proposals the first week of session and then will turn their attention to drafting their proposals, which will be released late February following an updated revenue forecast.

As they always do, lawmakers gazed into the crystal ball with the Associated Press, this time on January 6. The first two hours of the taped segment are with representatives from the four legislative caucuses, and the last 45 minutes includes a discussion with Governor Jay Inslee. The TVW video can be found [here](#). Looking for something shorter? Here's an [hour session](#) with legislative leaders and the Seattle Cityclub. Finally, Superintendent of Public Instruction Chris Reykdal shared what he called a “first annual, all things public education” press conference. Watch that hour-long segment [here](#).

Advocacy in a virtual session

Regardless of what protocols might change regarding floor action or public meetings with legislators, all committee meetings will remain remote, allowing virtual participation three ways:

- Sign up to testify remotely, using the House or Senate committee sign-in portal;
- Submit written testimony which will be shared with committee members and become part of the official record on the bill; and
- State your position of Pro, Con, or Other with just a few clicks of a mouse.

Like last session, who testifies and how long will be allowed is up to the Committee Chair. The average is about two minutes, although individuals signed up to testify should plan a 90-second and a 60-second version just in case.

- Here is the [Senate Committee portal](#).
- Here is the [House Committee portal](#).

When an individual signs up to testify, a unique participation link will be generated and show on the page (this is new this year), and the link also will be sent to the email address provided on the sign up.

As in the past, all committee meetings will be televised by [TVW](#) and can be found on the day of, at or in the TVW archives.

A couple of other things to keep in mind:

- The portal for signing up to testify on a bill will close one hour prior to the start of the hearing.
- Submitting written testimony through the portal is allowed up to 24 hours after the public hearing.

WSPTA Legislative Priorities

(All bills may be accessed [here](#))

Washington State PTA adopts a [two-year list of priorities](#). Delegates at the 2020 Legislative Assembly adopted a list of Top 5 high-priority issues, and other adopted positions are listed as “Also Supported.” You will find updated one-page briefing papers on each issue and videos on the Advocacy page [here](#), all of which can be shared with legislators to advance WSPTA priorities.

Finally, WSPTA members can find a treasure trove of advocacy resources on the [Focus on Advocacy](#) page.

Look for bills and committee hearings that relate to the Top 5 and WSPTA's “Also Supported Positions” in the *Week Ahead* section and Bill Tracking List.

The Week Ahead

(Schedule subject to change)

Governor Inslee is expected to deliver a State of the State address on Tuesday. His remarks will be made in the State Reception Room of the Legislative Building with a few invited guests, and broadcast through TVW.

Monday, January 10

College & Workforce Development (House) - Virtual - 1/10 @ 1:30pm

- HB 1601 - Public Hearing - Expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Appropriations (House) - Virtual - 1/10 @ 3:30pm

- HB 1816 - Public Hearing - Making 2021-2023 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Tuesday, January 11

Education (House) - Virtual - 1/11 @ 8:00am

- SHB 1162 - Public Hearing - Concerning high school graduation credit and pathway options. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.) (Support/Medium)

Community & Economic Development (House) - Virtual - 1/11 @ 10:00am

- HB 1723 - Public Hearing - Closing the digital equity divide by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecommunications services, devices, and training. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Local Government (House) - Virtual - 1/11 @ 10:00am

- ESHB 1241 - Public Hearing - Planning under the growth management act. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Capital Budget (House) - Virtual - 1/11 @ 1:30pm

- HB 1781 - Public Hearing - Concerning the capital budget. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual - 1/11 @ 4:00pm

- SB 5693 - Public Hearing - Making 2021-2023 fiscal biennium supplemental operating appropriations. (If measure is referred to committee.)

Wednesday, January 12

College & Workforce Development (House) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 8:00am

- HB 1687 - Public Hearing - Enhancing the college bound scholarship program by increasing opportunities for students to attend community and technical colleges. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- HB 1736 - Public Hearing - Establishing a state student loan program. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

- HB 1835 - Public Hearing - Creating outreach and completion initiatives to increase postsecondary enrollment. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Civil Rights & Judiciary (House) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 10:00am

- HB 1630 - Public Hearing - Establishing restrictions on the possession of weapons in certain locations. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- HB 1705 - Public Hearing - Concerning ghost guns. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual - 1/12 @ 10:30am

- SB 5497 - Public Hearing - Extending voting authority to student members on the state board of education. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- SB 5563 - Public Hearing - Concerning enrollment stabilization funding to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- SB 5581 - Public Hearing - Addressing pupil transportation allocations. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- SB 5595 - Public Hearing – OFM request: Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Thursday, January 13

College & Workforce Development (House) - Virtual - 1/13 @ 10:00am

- HB 1601 - Exec Session - Expanding the students experiencing homelessness and foster youth pilot program. (If measure is referred to committee.)

Education (House) - Virtual - 1/13 @ 1:30pm

- HB 1664 - Public Hearing – OSPI request bill: Concerning prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)
- HB 1746 - Public Hearing - Updating the 2015 report and recommendations for supporting student success through measuring and mitigating community risk and protective predictors since the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Public Safety (House) - Virtual - 1/13 @ 1:30pm

- HB 1507 - Public Hearing - Establishing a mechanism for independent prosecutions of criminal conduct arising from police use of force. (Remote testimony.)

Ways & Means (Senate) - Virtual - 1/13 @ 4:00pm

- SB 5651 - Public Hearing - Concerning the capital budget. (If measure is referred to committee.)

Friday, January 14

Early Learning & K-12 Education (Senate) - Virtual - 1/14 @ 8:00am

- SB 5537 - Public Hearing - Changing compulsory school attendance requirements for children five, six, and seven years of age. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)

Behavioral Health Subcommittee to Health & Long Term Care (Senate) - Virtual - 1/14 @ 10:30am

- SB 5638 - Public Hearing - Concerning expediting approval for applicants for an associate license as a social worker, mental health counselor, or marriage and family therapist. (Remote testimony.) (If measure is referred to committee.)