

Weekly Legislative Update: Education

Issue Team Chair: Catherine Ahl

Contact: cahl@lwvwa.org or 360-697-7924

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Bills We Support

HB 1003 Expanding access to dual credit programs. Would subsidize all dual credit costs and fees for students whose family incomes would make them eligible for state financial aid in college. It was heard in the House Education Committee on Jan. 23, along with HB 1146 and HB 1316 which also deal with dual credit. Only HB 1146 passed on Feb. 2, passed the House on Feb. 13, and referred to the Senate Ed. Comm., and the other two were amended and passed by the committee on Feb. 7. HB 1316 will be heard by the Appropriations Comm. on Feb. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

HB 1044 Providing capital financial assistance to small school districts with demonstrated funding challenges. It was heard in the House Capital Budget Committee on Jan. 26 and will be voted on by the committee on Feb. 20 at 8:00 a.m.

HB 1109 Providing funding for school districts for special education. Funding for public schools to conduct initial evaluations for special education and to develop individualized education programs for the eligible students during the summers of 2023, 2024, and 2025. It was passed by the House Education Committee on Jan. 26, heard in the Appropriations Committee on Feb. 9, and will be voted on by the committee on Feb. 20 at 1:30 p.m.

HB 1207 Preventing and responding to harassment, intimidation, bullying, and discrimination in schools. It clarifies and refines existing policies and regulations and requires annual access to these rights. It passed the House Education Committee with amendments on Jan. 26 and is now on the House floor.

HB 1210 Concerning the recording of school board meetings. It would require that all regular and special meetings of school district boards of directors at which a final action is taken or formal public testimony is accepted shall be audio recorded and such recordings shall be maintained for a period of not less than five years. It was passed on the House floor on Feb. 1 with an amendment that reduced the period to be kept from 5 to 1 year and referred to the Senate State Government & Elections Committee, which had a hearing on Feb. 17 at 8:00 a.m..

HB 1228 Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education. This is an equity issue for our students, was heard in the House Education Committee on Jan. 24, a substitute was passed on Feb. 7, and was referred to Appropriations.

[HB 1744](#) Clarifying the responsibilities and accountability for the effective delivery and oversight of public education services to charter school students. The bill makes various changes to provisions governing the administration and oversight of charter schools, including new and modified duties for charter schools, charter school boards, charter school authorizers, the Charter School Commission, and the State Board of Education. It was heard in the House Education Committee on Feb. 9, and LWVWA testified Pro. Signing in online were 189 Pro, 24 Con and 4 Other. A substitute was passed on Feb. 16 with a vote of 15-0.

[SB 5020](#) Concerning elementary education starting at six years of age. Would amend the compulsory attendance laws to ensure that every child begins to receive educational instruction beginning by six years of age, instead of eight. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 11, passed by committee on Jan.19, and referred to the Ways & Means Committee.

[SB 5072](#) Advancing equity in programs for highly capable students. Improves procedures for referral, screening, assessment, identification, and placement of highly capable students. A substitute was passed on the Senate floor on Feb. 8 and referred to the House Education Committee.

[SB 5102](#) Concerning school library information and technology programs. Every board of directors shall provide resources and materials for the operation of a school library information and technology program ensuring every student in the school district has access to a school library information and technology program. A substitute was passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Feb. 6 and was heard in the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 14.

[SB 5174](#) Providing adequate and predictable student transportation. Would gather additional data and implement a new student transportation formula to address shortcomings in the existing student transportation formula. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 12, a substitute was passed by on Jan. 25, and was heard in the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 2. A similar bill, SHB 1248, passed Appropriations and is in Rules.

[SB 5257](#) Ensuring elementary school students receive sufficient daily recess. Recess supports the mental, physical, and emotional health of students and positively impacts their learning and behavior. The amount of time spent on recess varies throughout the state; therefore, youth do not have equitable access to opportunities for physical activity, self-directed play, and time outdoors. A companion bill, HB 1504, passed in the House Education Committee on Feb. 14 and is in Rules. A substitute to [SB 5257](#) was passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Feb. 1 and is on the Senate floor.

[SB 5311](#) Concerning special education funding formula. The state pays for special education on a per-student basis, which maxes out when more than 13.5% of a district's students receive special education services. This cap is an average of the enrollment of disabled kids across the state. A substitute bill, which raises the percent to 14.5 and raises the excess cost multiplier

from 0.995 to 1.1283 over 4 years, was passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 26 and was heard by the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 9.

[SB 5315](#) Concerning nonpublic agencies operating special education programs for students with disabilities. The office of Superintendent of Public Instruction shall establish standards for approval, monitoring, and investigating school district contracts with nonpublic agencies operating special education programs for students with disabilities. Standards shall ensure that any student served by a nonpublic agency has the same rights and protections that they would have if served by a school district. A substitute was passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 30, and it was heard in the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 9.

[SB 5355](#) Mandating instruction on sex trafficking prevention and identification for students in grades seven through 12. Beginning no later than the 2024-25 school year, school districts must provide this instruction at least once between grades 7 and 12. The instruction may be a stand-alone course or integrated into other relevant courses, or an existing course may be repurposed to include this instruction. This could be included in the Comprehensive Sexual Health Education program for all students, that LWVWA supported in 2020 and participated in the campaign for Referendum 90 which was approved by the voters of the state. It was passed by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Feb. 2, was passed without recommendation by the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 13, and is now on the Senate floor.

Bills We Are Watching

[HB 1064](#) Creating a school safety capital grant program to provide for physical improvements intended to advance the safety or security of a school facility. Eligible project types include but are not limited to: Design and construction of security vestibules; purchase and installation of metal detectors, facility key card access, remote door access, or panic buttons; fencing; lighting; and crime prevention through environmental design projects. It was heard in the House Capital Budget Committee on Jan. 26.

[HB 1238](#) Providing free school meals for all. The Governor's budget included \$60 million to fully fund a federal program that provides free meals in schools with large populations of low-income students. A substitute was passed by the House Education Committee on Feb. 7 and referred to the Appropriations Committee.

[SB 5048](#) Eliminating college in the high school fees. A substitute was passed by the Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee on Jan. 18 and will be heard by the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 18 at 9:00 a.m.

[SB 5339](#) Providing free school meals for all. This is a companion bill to [HB 1238](#), a substitute was passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Jan. 30 and referred to the Ways & Means Committee.

Bills We Are Opposing

HB 1071 Securing schools by authorizing funding for a school resource officer (SRO) in every school. This bill seems to be a bit flexible and doesn't mandate that every school have a SRO but adds SROs to the definition of Basic Ed. However, evidence shows it is more important for schools to have more nurses, counselors and social workers, which are part of Basic Ed and underfunded. The bill was heard in the House Education Committee on Jan.23 and will be eliminated from this list next week since it didn't pass by the cut-off date..

HB 1418 Providing enrichment funding for charter public schools. This would provide local effort assistance (LEA) of \$1550 per pupil to charter schools. Under the Local Effort Assistance program, the state provides additional funding to school districts at a disadvantage in raising enrichment levies due to low property values. Districts eligible for LEA, but levy below \$1.50 per \$1,000 rate, receive LEA in proportion to their actual levy collection. Unlike school districts, charter school boards do not have the authority to levy taxes. School districts that can't even pass a levy are not eligible for LEA. Therefore, charter schools are not eligible for LEA either. The bill was heard in the House Appropriations Committee on Feb. 16 and League testified Con..

How You Can Be Involved

You may express your opinion on legislation with the LWVWA issue chairs. We will take your perspectives under considerations as we determine our support for legislation and prepare testimony. Contact: Catherine Ahl, Education Issue Chair, cahl@lwvwa.org or call (360) 697-7924.