

Weekly Legislative Update: Education

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Bills We Support

HB 1044 Providing capital financial assistance to small school districts with demonstrated funding challenges. A substitute passed the House on March 8, was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 23, and will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.

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. A substitute passed the House 95-1 on March 1, was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 15, and passed on March 20 to Ways & Means.

HB 1146 Requires public high schools to notify students and their parents about available dual credit programs and any financial assistance available to reduce the cost of these programs. It passed the House on Feb. 13, was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 20, and passed on March 22 to Rules.

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. A substitute was passed by the House on Feb. 27, was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 20 and passed on March 22 to Rules.

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. It was heard by the Senate State Government & Elections Committee on Feb. 17, passed March 17 and is now on the Senate floor.

HB 1316 Deals with dual credit courses and Running Start passed the House on March 4, was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 13 and passed on March 22 to Ways & Means.

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 by the House on March 6 with a vote of 95-0 and was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 22, with LWVWA testifying Pro. It will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.

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 by the Senate on Feb. 8, was heard in the House Education Committee on March 1, passed on March 9, and was passed 97-0 by the House on March 22.

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 on March 6, was heard by the House Education Committee on March 21 and will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.

SB 5174 Providing adequate and predictable student transportation. Would gather additional data and implement a new student transportation formula to address shortcoming in the existing student transportation formula. A substitute, which basically took out the "adequate & predictable" part of the bill, passed the Senate on March 3, was heard in the House Appropriations Committee on March 15 and passed on March 22 with an amendment to restore many issues in the original bill.

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 substitute was passed by the Senate, amended by the House Education Committee, passed on March 9, and passed the House on March 20. (A companion bill, HB 1504, passed the House 97-0.)

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 second substitute bill, passed by Ways & Means, raises the percent to 15 and raises the excess cost multiplier from 0.995 to 1.12 (\$1.2 billion over 6 years). It passed the Senate 48-0 on March 3, was heard in the House Education Committee on March 14, and passed on March 20 to Appropriations. [A similar bill, HB 1436, (\$700 million over 6 years) passed the

House, was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 15 and will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.]

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 second substitute was passed by the Senate on March 7, was heard by the House Education Committee on March 20 and will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.

SB 5355 Mandating instruction on sex trafficking prevention and identification for students in grades seven through 12. Beginning no later than the 2025-26 school year, school districts must provide this instruction at least once between grades 7 and 12. The instruction may be 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 passed the Senate 48-0 on March 1, was heard in the House Education Committee on March 16 and will be voted on at 1:30 pm on March 27.

Bills We Are Watching

HB 1238 Providing free school meals for all. An amended second substitute passed the House 98-3 on March 2. This will provide free meals only for elementary school students in low income schools and reduces the cost from \$100 million to \$16 million. It was heard by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on March 16, passed on March 20 and will be heard in Ways & Means on March 28 at 4:00 pm.

SB 5048 Eliminating college in the high school fees. A substitute was passed by the Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee, a second substitute was passed by the Ways & Means Committee and passed the Senate on March 8. It will be heard by the House Postsecondary Education & Workforce Committee on March 21 and passed on March 24.

Bills We Are Opposing

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. ably **It is probably dead, but we'll work to see that it doesn't get into the budget.**

Bills that Died in Committee

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 didn't pass out of Appropriations.

HB 1228 Building a multilingual, multiliterate Washington through dual and tribal language education. This is an equity issue for our students. It didn't pass out of Appropriations.

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 didn't pass out of Ways & Means

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 didn't pass out of the House Capital Budget Committee.

SB 5339 Providing free school meals for all. This was a companion bill to **HB 1238**, that was passed by the House. It didn't pass out of Ways & Means.

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.