

## Weekly Legislative Update: **Education**

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### **Bills Needing Action This Week**

There are no bills needing action this week. Most have been passed by the policy committees and been sent to a fiscal committee or are scheduled for a vote this week. Please read under the Bills We Support to see the latest status of the bills. You may watch Executive Sessions where a vote is taken, but no public comments are taken.

### **Bills We Support**

**[HB 1590](#) Enrollment stabilization funding for local schools to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** It is in the House Appropriations Committee, but no hearing has been scheduled.

**[SB 5563](#) Enrollment stabilization funding for local schools to address enrollment declines due to the COVID-19 pandemic.** It passed the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee and was sent to the Ways & Means Committee.

**[HB 1630](#) Makes it unlawful to carry a firearm onto facilities being used for official meetings of a school district board of directors.** This would also apply to city, town, county and other municipality buildings being used for public meetings. A substitute bill, including the issues addressed in HB 1618 regarding elections facilities, was passed by the House Civil Rights & Judiciary Committee and sent to the Appropriations Committee.

**[HB 1664](#) Increases prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support in schools** by increasing the number of school nurses. A substitute bill was passed by the House Education Committee and sent to the Appropriations Committee.

**[HB 1723](#) Closes the digital equity divide** by increasing the accessibility and affordability of telecommunication services, devices, and training. It was passed by the House Community & Economic Development Committee and sent to the Appropriations Committee.

**[SB 5497](#) Extends voting authority to student members on the state board of education.** The Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee will hold an Executive Session on Jan. 28 at 8 am.

**[SB 5537](#) Changes compulsory school attendance to include children five, six, and seven years of age.** Washington is the only state that requires school attendance beginning with children who are eight years of age. LWVWA has supported this change for many years. An Executive Session is scheduled in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee for Jan. 28 at 8 am.

**[SB 5595](#) Increases prototypical school formulas for physical, social, and emotional support staff, plus additional increases of the number of school nurses. A substitute bill was passed by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee and sent to the Ways & Means Committee.**

**[SB 5630](#) Expands the program of basic education to include early learning.** Early learning would be phased in for three and four year-olds starting in the 2026-27 school year and making it an entitlement by the 2029-30 school year. LWVWA has had a position that basic education should include birth to five years. This is a start.

**[SB 5568](#) Concerning preemption of municipal laws restricting the open carry of weapons.** Provides that cities, towns, counties, and other municipalities may enact laws and ordinances restricting the open carry of firearms or other weapons at any public meeting; any building or facility owned or operated by a city, town, county, or other municipality; or any permitted demonstration within their respective jurisdictions. This allows jurisdictions to prohibit open carry rather than outlaws them across the state as does HB 1630, but this may be the compromise that can pass both houses. The Senate Law & Justice Committee will hold an Executive Session on Jan. 27 at 10:30 am.

## Bills We're Watching

**[SB 5820](#)**- Rather than the people electing the Superintendent of Public Instruction, the governor would appoint that official. This would require a constitutional amendment. This bill was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Friday, Jan. 21 at 8:00 am. LWVWA has no position on this issue.

**[HJR 4200](#)** - Amending the Constitution to allow a simple majority of voters voting to authorize school district bonds. LWVWA has no position on school bonds, only levies, but I know a lot of our members are interested in this issue. A hearing was held by the House Education Committee on Tuesday, Jan. 18 at 8 am.

## Bills We Oppose

**[HB 1591](#) Provides access to local enrichment funding for charter schools.** Funding for school districts is provided through levies approved by the voters, which doesn't include extra state funding for charter schools.

**[HB 1633](#) Family Empowerment Scholarship Program would provide vouchers for homeschooling or private schools.** Public funding should go to the public schools as the Constitution requires.

## How You Can Be Involved

- During the legislative session we will send Action Alerts in the [Legislative Newsletter](#). Please respond to these, which will direct you to an application to facilitate

communicating with your legislators on an important vote in committees or on the chamber floor.

- Local Leagues in Washington have action chairs who coordinate action teams. Some local Leagues have education teams to take action locally. Contact your local League action chair to find out and join.
- You may also 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. Catherine Ahl, Education Issue Chair, [cahl@lwvwa.org](mailto:cahl@lwvwa.org).