

Session Wrap-Up: Education

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This was a good year for education funding, especially special education, as it brought the state closer to full funding. More children will have recess, highly capable students will be better placed, policies dealing with Running Start and dual credit funding were improved, accountability and oversight of charter schools were strengthened as were those of nonpublic agencies operating special education, and instruction on sex trafficking prevention will be given to high schoolers. It was a long and busy session but worth every minute.

Bills We Supported That Passed

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 Legislature on April 13 and is on the Governor's desk.*

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. *The Governor signed.*

HB 1316 Deals with dual credit courses and Running Start. *It passed the Legislature on April 17 and is on the Governor's desk.*

HB 1436 Funding special education. Adds the special education funding policies from SB 5311: Increases the special education excess cost multipliers from 0.995 to 1.12, Increases the special education enrollment funding cap from 13.5 percent to 15 percent and provides for in-depth audit and review of our state's special education system. *It passed the Legislature on April 22 and is on the Governor's desk.*

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 passed the Legislature on April 19 and is on the Governor's desk.*

SB 5072 Advancing equity in programs for highly capable students. Improves procedures for referral, screening, assessment, identification, and placement of highly capable students. It passed the Legislature on April 13 and is on the Governor's desk.

SB 5257 Ensuring elementary school students receive sufficient daily recess. 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. It passed the Legislature on April 14 and is on the Governor's desk.

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. It passed the Legislature on April 21 and is on the Governor's desk.

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. It passed the Legislature on April 17 and is on the Governor's desk.

Bills We Watched That Passed

HB 1238 Providing free school meals for all. This will provide free meals for K-4 students in low income schools and also provides funding for the Learning Assistance Program and the National Board Certified Teacher Bonus. It passed the Legislature on April 18 and is on the Governor's desk.

SB 5048 Eliminating college in the high school fees. It passed the Legislature on April 14 and is on the Governor's desk.

Bills That Died But May Come Up Next Session

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 didn't pass out of Ways & Means.

HB 1044 Providing capital financial assistance to small school districts with demonstrated funding challenges. The House and Senate couldn't agree.

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

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. It didn't pass out of the House Appropriations Committee.

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. The House and Senate couldn't agree.

SB 5311 Concerning special education funding formula. This bill was rolled into **HB 1436** which passed.

How You Can Be Involved

Meet with your local Legislators during the out-of-session time. Get to know them, so that during the next session they'll know who you are when you email them.
ontact: Catherine Ahl, Education Issue Chair, cahl@lwvwa.org or call (360) 697-7924.