

Weekly Legislative Update: Education

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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. All three bills will be voted on in committee on Feb. 2 at 8:00 am.

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.

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 heard in the House Education Committee on Jan. 17 and was passed out of committee on Jan. 26

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 was heard in the House Education Committee on Jan. 19 and was passed out of committee with amendments on Jan. 26.

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 heard in the House State Government Committee on Jan. 17, was passed out of committee on Jan. 25 and passed to the Rules Committee.

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, and will be voted on in committee on Feb. 2 at 8:00 am.

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. It was heard by the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 18, a substitute was passed by committee on Jan. 25 and sent to the Rules 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. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 23.

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, was passed by committee on Jan. 25, and will be heard in the Ways & Means Committee on Feb. 2 at 4:00 pm.

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. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 18 and passed out of committee on Jan. 26.

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 heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 19, was passed by committee on Jan. 26 and referred to the Ways & Means Committee.

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. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 19 and will be voted on in committee on Jan. 30 at 1:30 pm.

[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 heard in the Senate Committee on Early Learning & K-12 Education on Jan. 26.

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 Governors budget included \$60 million to fully fund a federal program that provides free meals in schools with large populations of low-income students. HB 1238 was heard in the House Education Committee on Jan. 24 and will be voted on in committee on Feb. 2 at 8:00 am.

[SB 5048](#) Eliminating college in the high school fees. It was heard in the Senate Committee on Higher Education & Workforce Development, a substitute was voted out of committee on Jan. 18 and referred to the Ways & Means Committee.

[SB 5339](#) Providing free school meals for all. This is a companion bill to [HB 1238](#), it was heard in the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee on Jan. 23, and will be voted on in committee on Jan. 30 at 1:30 pm.

Bills We Are Opposing

[HB 1071](#) Securing schools by authorizing funding for a school resource officer (SRO) in every school. This bill appears to be mandating that every school has a SRO and adds SROs to the definition of Basic Ed. 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.

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.