



2019 Legislative Update

"You can't direct the wind but you can adjust the sails." ~ Anonymous

Important note: At press time the TVW Web site and all links to recorded content appear to be having technical difficulties. Hopefully this will resolve soon and the hyperlinks in this report to TVW recordings will work!

Session Context

Today is day 42 of the legislative session and we are officially 40% through the 105-day regular session. Friday, 2/22 marked the [first major milestone](#) in the 105-day Legislative Session: **the first policy cut-off**. In order for a bill to continue moving through the process, it had to be passed out of its policy committee by 5pm and on to its next stop (either to the appropriate fiscal committee or to the Rules committee to be scheduled for floor debate). Just as "snowmageddon" helped with some tree-trimming on the capitol campus, legislative cut-offs are built-in "pruning" mechanisms. While about 70% of the bills on WSSDA's bill watch list are still moving, we are just getting started. Check out the Bill Watch section of this report for the low-down on bills we're tracking in [WSSDA priority areas](#).

While legislators and lobbyists worked tirelessly this week to amend and move bills, the cloud looming on the horizon is the reality of the state budget. While anticipated state revenues appear to be higher than expected (per last week's [monthly revenue update](#)), planned and proposed spending is also much higher – **much more than expected revenues**. This does not bode well for making tough decisions in the weeks to come regarding the hundreds of proposals totaling billions of dollars. As the next [revenue forecast](#) is expected on March 20th and the House's proposed budget will follow shortly behind, leadership in the House and Senate are clearly concerned.

In this week's media availability, House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan shared [a handout](#) with the audience that was presented early-on in the session during a [work session](#) in the [House Appropriations Committee](#) regarding the operating budget and the four-year outlook (skip to 1:12:46 for the work session start). The full PowerPoint [presentation](#) by non-partisan committee staff provides an informative overview of the Legislature's state and federal budgetary requirements (constitutional and statutory), and where they have discretion (see slides 11 – 13 and the [recording @ 1:21:05](#)) for details); and the revenue/spending outlook for the 2019-21 biennium, including explanation regarding the 1-year infusion of funding for K-12 salaries and implications of other requirements related to K-12 funding moving forward (slides 18-19 and the [recording @ 1:27:11](#)). It is important to note that this presentation was made prior to last week's [monthly revenue update](#) released by the Economic & Revenue Forecast Council, indicating tax collections being \$153.6M over the November forecast.

During their respective media availabilities this past Tuesday, House and Senate Democratic and Republican leadership had a bit to say on this topic:

Republican Leadership provided [commentary regarding the state budget and revenue](#); and Democratic Leadership discussed many aspects of the budget related to K-12 education:

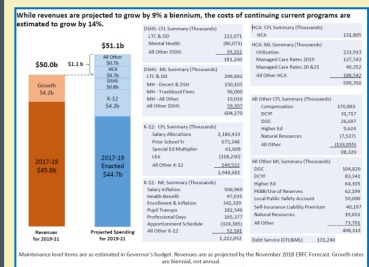
- ⇒ Revenue needs in relation to projected revenue, maintenance-level expenses (including the bow-wave costs for funding McCleary), and new investments: [Representative Sullivan & Senator Billig](#)
- ⇒ [McCleary accounting in the biennial budget](#)
- ⇒ [Funding needed for school employee healthcare benefits \(SEB\) & the options available to the Legislature](#)
- ⇒ [Local levy caps and new revenue needed](#)

2019 Legislative Session Week 6 — Feb. 24

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2019-21 operating budget snapshot:
Anticipated revenues & projected
spending (1/16/19)

[Click here](#) to see the week's committee hearings and bills that WSSDA staff engaged in (green shading indicates particular meetings/bills of interest). To gain further insights, check out [10-14 of WSSDA's week 6 update webinar](#) or [watch the webinar starting at 12:32](#). A few highlights pertaining to [WSSDA's legislative priorities](#) included:

Student Health & Safety

SSB 5315 (increasing student support staff in the prototypical school funding model) – The bill was [amended](#) by the committee. The [staff briefing](#) (skip to minute 51:41) and the [updated bill report](#) (pp. 2-3) provide an overview of the bill and technical amendments.

SSB 5395 (comprehensive sexual health education) – Three amendments were proposed by the committee, however only one was adopted. The [staff briefing](#) (skip to minute 53:39) provides an overview of the three amendment proposals. The [committee discussion](#) (skip to minute 1:05:08) and [bill report](#) are also helpful in learning more this changing bill.

SSB 5689 (harassment, intimidation, bullying (HIB), and discrimination in public schools) – This bill specifically addresses school district HIB policies and procedures and requires districts to adopt or amend an additional policy and procedure regarding transgender youth. The [staff briefing](#) (skip to minute 15:32) and [updated bill report](#) (pp. 2-4) describes the updated bill.

Student Success

⇒ Graduation requirements (assessments & pathways)

The [House Education Committee](#) voted two bills out of committee: [HB 1089](#) (pure delink) and [SHB 1599](#) (delink with new pathway requirements for graduation). The [staff briefing](#) provides a good overview of the bills and the [proposed amendment](#) for SHB 1599 (skip to minute 3:11). Committee discussion on both bills provide good insight from the members as to their passion on the subject, and commitment to addressing this issue this session (minutes 5:53 – 33:57).

The [Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee](#) voted on two bills related to this topic, but only one made it out of the committee: [SSB 5548](#) (multiple pathways to a meaningful high school diploma).

ma). There was virtually no committee discussion. The other bill was a pure delink, SB 5014. While the bill received a verbal “do pass” vote by the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, it did not receive sufficient signatures to move on.

Funding Model Equity

Three special education bills ([SB 5091](#) (safety net); [SB 5736](#) (increase multiplier); [SB 5532](#) (programmatic changes to special ed)) were heard in the [Senate Ways & Means Committee](#). WSSDA's support focus on any and all efforts to increase state funding for special education to close the gap between what the state provides and what districts subsidize out of local dollars.

SSB 5465 (public education funding) – The bill was amended by the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. The adopted amendment maintained the funding for institutional education funding, changed the title, and **eliminated the following provisions**:

- ⇒ The staffing ratio increases for school nurses, guidance counselors, and family and community engagement coordinators.
- ⇒ The requirement that the Legislature fund content-specific professional learning days.
- ⇒ The requirement that school districts adopt a minimum fund balance of at least 8.5 percent.

Public School Facilities

Bond elections - [HB 1184](#) / HJR 4203 (simple majority) were scheduled for a vote in the House Education Committee but no action was taken.

School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) funding - [SB 5853](#) was voted out of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. WSSDA is working with staff on possible amendments to improve the timeline for funding.

Rural school preservation/modernization – [SB 5572](#) was voted out of the Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education Committee. While the amendment to move the threshold for district eligibility from 1,000 to 2,000 students did not pass, the original bill will still move forward.

This coming week, nearly all of the bills voted out of the policy committees will attempt to work their way through the fiscal committees of the House and Senate by Friday, 3/1, the [second major milestone](#) of the session: the first fiscal cut-off. Then legislators go to the floor to debate bills as assigned by the [House](#) and [Senate](#) Rules Committees, rushing to meet the third major milestone: the House of Origin cut-off on March 13th. It is important to remember, that some bills are considered “Necessary to Implement the Budget” (NTIB) and are exempt from cut-off dates.

To stay apprised of evolving fiscal committee schedule next week, check out WSSDA's [Week 7 Schedule](#). At press, here are a few public hearings to note:

Monday:

- ⇒ [House Appropriations](#) will host public hearings on WSSDA priority bills regarding educator workforce and supply ([SHB 1139](#)); student and school safety ([SHB 1216](#) and [HB 1264](#)); and high school graduation requirements ([SHB 1599](#)).
- ⇒ [Senate Ways & Means Committee](#) will host a public hearing on WSSDA priority bills regarding the most current proposal regarding levy authority and local effort assistance (LEA) funding ([SSB 5313](#)) and small school district modernization grants ([SSB 5572](#)).

Tuesday:

- ⇒ [House Appropriations](#) will host public hearings on bills regarding student and school

health/safety ([SHB 1479](#)); extracurricular activity participation ([SHB 1660](#)); K-3 class-size reduction ([HB 2108](#)); school lunch durations ([SHB 1272](#)) and ESD health benefits ([HB 2096](#)).

Thursday:

- ⇒ [Senate Early Learning & K-12 Education](#) will host a work session on the [OSPI School Day Task Force](#) and comments on [SB 5933](#). WSSDA's Executive Director, Tim Garchow, is anticipated to serve as a panelist in the discussion.
- ⇒ [Senate Ways & Means](#) will host a public hearing on bills regarding simple majority in bond elections ([SB 5066](#)/SJR 8201); student support staffing ([SSB 5315](#)).

Bill Watch

WSSDA's [comprehensive bill watch list](#) provides a quick reference as to the status of all 262 bills we're tracking. Now that bill "pruning" has begun, the list is sorted so that the most "alive" bills are easy to reference. However, while it can be interesting to peruse the exhaustive list, below are a few "snapshot" resources within each of WSSDA's priority areas that will help you get a glimpse into the bills we are following most closely:

Student Health & Safety

Check out this document that provides an overview of many of the bills related to student and school health and safety that we're watching. Specifically we're interested in the comprehensive safety bills ([SHB 1216](#) & [SSB 5317](#)), those dealing with school resource officers ([HB 1035](#) and [SSB 5141](#)), and those taking steps toward increasing funding for student support staff.

Student Success

[Check out this document](#) for a snapshot of the "priority" bills that we are tracking related to educator recruitment and retention; and student-centered graduation requirements. Specifically we are excited about the efforts to decouple required state tests from graduation and increase attention to the high school and beyond plan and multiple pathways for students to graduate.

Funding Model Equity

[Check out this document](#) for a summary of bills related to special education funding and local program design/support. Specifically we are interested in any and all efforts to address safety net funding and increase the excess cost multiplier.

In addition, one primary bill ([SSB 5313](#)) is still in play that would increase districts' levy authority and restore access to local effort assistance (LEA, or levy equalization). The bill also provides a one-year hold harmless provision. We are supportive of this approach and are concerned one year of hold harmless may not be sufficient for districts that went out for 2-3 year levies last spring.

Public School Facilities

[Check out this document](#) for a snapshot of the "priority" bills that we are tracking on key moves needed to improve funding for school construction. In addition, we are considering ways to infuse continued momentum toward implementing the top recommendations from the [2018 Joint Legislative Task Force on Improving Funding for School Construction](#) (see Decision Matrix on page 30 of the [Final Report](#)). With regard to lowering the threshold needed to pass school construction bond measures, the only bill still technically "alive" on this topic is [SB 5066](#). Neither the 55% bill ([SB 5252](#)) nor the House version of simple majority ([SB 1184](#)) made it out of their policy committees.

Important!

As you track bills moving through the process, most have been amended in some way likely in response to stakeholder feedback. Therefore, it is very important that you review and provide input on the MOST CURRENT version of the bill. The [last 5 minutes of this week's webinar](#) provides support on how to read and navigate versions of bills.

HOMEWORK

Take Action

WEEK 7 Suggested Actions:

Is it DO-ABLE?

Focus on FISCAL!

- ⇒ Review the Bill Watch section of this report and/or [WSSDA's comprehensive bill watch list](#) and focus-in on bills that have been assigned to fiscal committee, rules, and/or are on the "reading" list for floor deliberation.
 - ⇒ Visit with your admin team and/or board about **fiscal** and **implementation** considerations for the bills you've identified.
 - ⇒ Share that information with:
 - Your local legislators
 - Legislators from your region on the fiscal and rules committees
 - WSSDA staff so we can support you!
- If you need help deciding, here are a few ideas:
- ⇒ [SSB 5313](#), (**levies & local effort assistance**) – implications for your district? Will a 1-year hold harmless be sufficient?
 - ⇒ [SHB 1599, Part II, Section 201](#) & [SB 5598, Section 20](#) (**high school graduation requirements/pathways**) – focus on the pathway options described on pages 37 & 38. What do you like? What might be challenging? How will students be impacted?
 - ⇒ Any of the [special education funding bills](#) – gather and communicate the gap between state funding and what your district pays for special education. What's the total cost? How much will your local levy continue to subsidize if special education isn't significantly funded?
 - ⇒ [SSB 5395](#) (**sexual health education**) – consider the revised timeline requirements for all districts described on pp. 2-3 of the [bill report](#). Is this do-able? What would it take? Costs? Other considerations?

What to communicate

- Identify the bill numbers/topics and why you are writing (Do you want changes to the bill? Do you want the bill to be (or not to be) voted out of committee?)
- Share the implications of the proposed ideas on your district (positive, negative, unintended)
- Offer your support as they work through the issue
- Thank them

2019 Session Dates **

January 14 — First day of 105-day session

Feb. 10 & 11 — ~~CANCELLED~~
WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference & Day on the Hill

February 22 — Policy committee cutoff

March 1 — Fiscal committee cutoff

March 13 — House of Origin cutoff (5 pm)

April 3 — Policy committee cutoff (opposite house)

April 9 — Fiscal committee cutoff (opposite house)

April 17 — Last day to consider opposite house bills (except budgets and matters necessary to implement the budget, and differences between the houses)

April 28 — Last day of regular session



Stay Connected

WSSDA and other education partners in the state are committed to developing and sharing resources to help our members learn about these issues and to communicate about them effectively.

WSSDA Resources:

⇒ **WSSDA Legislative Updates** - Includes weekly committee schedules, bill watch lists, and WSSDA's legislative updates during the legislative session.

⇒ **School Board Legislative Representatives** — This is an informational web page for Leg Reps with web links to help you navigate the legislative process, including weekly webinars during session.

⇒ WSSDA's **2019 Legislative Committee** is eager to engage school board Legislative Representatives in active outreach, education, and relationship-building with local legislators.

⇒ **WSSDA's Government Relations staff** are here to serve you! **Director:** Jessica Vavrus (j.vavrus@wssda.org, 360-890-5867)
Legislative Coordinator: Logan Endres (l.endres@wssda.org, 360-252-3011)

WA State Legislature

⇒ **2019 Legislative Contact Roster** (updated 2/4/19)

⇒ **Find your Legislative District**

⇒ **Legislative Information Center**

⇒ **Weekly Committee Schedules**

⇒ **Bill Information and Tracking** -

From these pages you can follow the bills you are most interested in and also provide [comments on bills](#).

⇒ **TVW** - TVW is a great resource where you can watch hearings live, or go to the Archives to view past hearings of interest, just select the date and committee.

AND....if you want to dig deeper check out the [2019 session priorities of other K-12 education associations](#). Knowing this information will help inform our collective advocacy priorities and strategies.

Upcoming Events

January 14—April 28—2019 Legislative Session

Every Friday at noon through April 26—Weekly Legislative Update webinars for school board Leg. Reps. [Register here.](#)

March 29—May 10—WSSDA position solicitation process

March—May—WSSDA Spring Regional Meetings

May 22nd—[WSSDA/WASA/AWSP Equity Conference](#). Registration opens in March.

September 27 & 28—[WSSDA's Legislative Assembly](#) (to establish positions for 2020 session)

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