



Washington State
School Directors' Association

Legislative Update

February 27, 2015

By [Deb Merle](#)

Blessings and curses

Deb Merle, WSSDA

While the deluge of new bills stopped short, House Appropriations meetings routinely went long - well into the evening, in fact, as the committee heard testimony and voted on about three hundred bills this week.

The lucky few

Even with long meetings, only a fraction of the bills that have come through all the policy committees in the House and Senate so far this session will be heard and voted on by the fiscal committees this week.

The next stop for bills that make it out of House Appropriations, House Capital or Senate Ways and Means, is the Rules Committee in their respective houses. Hundreds of bills will pile up there waiting for a Rules Committee member to “pull” them to the floor calendar. Very few will get the nod. Bills that *are* referred to the floor calendar can languish there, or they can pop up at any time on the “order of consideration,” which is a list of bills to be voted on by the full body that day.

From good to better

Bills we generally “like” aren’t necessarily “perfect” at this point in the session. But, there is still a long way to go and bills are amended at almost every step in the process, so we continue to watch and work with sponsors. Some of the bills heard in the fiscal committees that we like and that could be voted out of committee by the end of this week include:

School Construction Assistance Program Funding

- SB 5859, Sen Pedersen – Changes state construction funding formula drivers to a 3-year rolling average of the actual costs of construction and to the national average of classroom space per student.
- HB 2161, Rep Pollet – As above plus, creates a construction funding assistance account for high growth areas of Seattle.

Substitute Teacher Shortages

- SB 5148, Sen Parlette – Allows early retirees to work as substitute teachers and continue receiving retirement, with no cap on hours.
- SB 5941, Sen Rivers – Creates certification for adjunct college professors who hold a master's degree so they can substitute, without obtaining an emergency certification.

Public Records Act Relief

- SHB 1086, Rep Moeller – Allows agencies to assess a fee for the actual cost of providing public records if the request is primarily for commercial purposes.
- SHB 1684, Rep Takko – Establishes a charge for transmitting records that have been requested electronically under the Public Records Act.

Growth Management Act Taskforce

- SHB 1420, Rep Wilcox – Creates a Legislative Taskforce to discuss siting schools outside of Urban Growth Areas. The taskforce may offer recommendations to the legislature by December 15.

See the WSSDA [Bill Watch List](#) for an ever shrinking list of bills we're tracking.

Cut-off Schmut-off

We won't be publishing a Hearing Schedule for next week because all (or I should say most) of the action shifts to the floor of each house and standing committees take a break. Today however, House Education Committee Chair Santos scheduled a Tuesday morning work session on the Compensation Technical Workgroup recommendations, followed by a single-bill public hearing.

The bill to be heard, HB 1854 (Magendanz), would revise the salary allocation model for teachers who enter the profession beginning in the 2017-18 school year. Under the proposed model, teachers' salaries would depend on their level of certification; one for residency status, another for those who hold a professional certificate, and a third for teachers who have achieved National Board Certified Teacher status. Bonuses would be provided for those who teach in "hard to find" positions, in schools with high poverty, and in nine top-performing "growth" schools as recognized by the State Board of Education and OSPI. Veteran teachers are grandfathered into the present system, unless they choose to opt-in to the new system.

Have fun next week!