

**Week 1:
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“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” ~Henry Ford

Monday, January 8th marked the first day of the 60-day “short” legislative session. The 2017 “long” session was unprecedented with three special sessions dragging into late July so legislators are understandably and publically committed to making this one short. For real.

During the interim, WSSDA and school directors across the state met with policy makers to thank them for their efforts and to help them understand the emerging opportunities and implications of laws that were passed. “Short” sessions are meant to move forward bills from the long session, clean-up legislation that passed, plant seeds for future sessions, and to adopt operating and capital budgets for the second half of the biennium. In addition to the profound impacts of transitioning to new basic education funding policies, the lack of a capital budget from 2017 is looming. So the legislature needs to come together – and work together – quickly.

2018 SESSION INSIGHTS

In terms of the political complexion of the legislature, the Democrats are in a narrow majority (one vote in each chamber) for the first time since 2013. This week’s TWV program [Inside Olympia](#) features interviews with the new Senate Majority Leader Sharon Nelson and House Majority Leader Pat Sullivan where they provide insights into each of their party’s goals for 2018.

Further insights from state leaders can be found this week on TWV’s program, [The Impact](#), Monday’s opening day special edition included interviews with leaders from the House and Senate (House Majority Leader [Rep. Pat Sullivan](#); Senate Majority Leaders [Sen. Sharon Nelson](#); Senate Republican Leader [Sen. Mark Schoesler](#); House Republican Leader [Rep. Dan Kristiansen](#); and [Governor Jay Inslee](#)) who discussed school funding and EHB 2242 “corrections”; state property tax and revenue proposals; and the capital budget and *Hirst* water rights negotiations as connected to school construction (see link to Rep. Kristiansen). In addition, [State Superintendent Chris Reykdal](#) shared his insights on and recommendations for EHB 2242 levies and what he’s hearing from school districts regarding special education, recommendations on fix policy, high school assessment requirements for graduation, and isolation and restraint compliance.

[Wednesday’s program](#) featured a good summary of the revenue proposal and [discussion with State Treasurer Duane Davidson](#) on the use of state reserves to fulfill the Governor’s revenue proposal that would accelerate funding of basic education using state reserves and instituting a state carbon tax.

[TWV’s weekly programming](#) is a great way to stay connected with broad legislative issues. In addition to *Inside Olympia* and *The Impact*, TWV offers a daily and weekly [Legislative Review](#), and live and archived recordings of committee hearings and work sessions.

WSSDA’S 2018 LEGISLATIVE POSITIONS & PRIORITIES

WSSDA’s [2018 Legislative Priorities](#) fall into three main buckets:

- ⇒ **Transitioning to a new funding model** (EHB 2242) – The new structures and funding in last session’s bill are complex with both short- and long-term opportunities and challenges. WSSDA’s priorities address hold harmless, levy reform, salary schedule, regionalization, and support in bargaining and negotiations. In addition, WSSDA is a member of the statewide Local Funding Work Group. This group is comprised of associations representing over 8,000 school district leaders and employees. The [Local Funding Work Group’s 2018 legislative priorities](#) focus on making much-needed adjustments to EHB 2242, specifically related to special education, levies, and the statewide salary schedule.
- ⇒ **Supporting every student** – WSSDA’s priorities address special education funding; attracting and retaining high quality staff; high school pathways and assessment graduation requirements; support for every student’s social-emotional needs; provision of education to every student regardless of immigration status; and support for homeless students.
- ⇒ **Investing in school facilities** - Funding school construction is a joint effort between the state and local districts. State law stipulates that the state will pay an average of half the cost of construction. WSSDA’s priorities address improving the school construction assistance formula, fully funding mandates, and addressing bond passage requirements by a simple majority.

In addition, WSSDA’s [full listing of 2018 legislative positions](#) and associated [advocacy resources](#) are available to help school directors understand and learn about issues that impact school districts.



ISSUE AREAS & WEEK 1 RECAP

Transitioning to a new funding formula

In addition to the Governor's [2018 supplemental budget proposal for K12 \(WSSDA overview\)](#), three bills were introduced this week that will put into motion efforts to create a “trailer” bill to the new basic education funding bill (EHB 2242) that was enacted late in the 2017 session. The “trailer” will take steps toward addressing some of the statewide challenges and unintended consequences districts are experiencing. The bills are:

- [HB 2721 / SB 6362](#) – OSPI request legislation ([click here for a summary](#) and check out [OSPI's 2242 web page](#) for further analysis)
- [HB 2717 / SB 6397](#) – Sponsored by Rep. Dolan and Sen. Hunt ([click here for a summary](#))
- [HB 2763 / SB 6394](#) – Focused on fixes to the Learning Assistance Program (sponsored by Rep. Jenkin and Sen. Walsh)

Legislators across both chambers are committed to learning more about implications and doing what they can this session to address them, while also laying the groundwork for final policy adjustments that may need to be made in the 2019 long session. WSSDA and other education stakeholders will be digging into these bills in the coming weeks to help policy makers understand the implications of each and create a final “trailer” bill that will address many of the challenges. Stay tuned!

In addition, the [Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee](#) hosted a work session Tuesday where they heard from many district leaders on a [variety of education issues](#) including Implementation of EHB 2242:

- [Levies](#) – Tacoma and Skamania school districts
- [Special education funding impacts](#) – Seattle
- [Social emotional learning](#) – Spokane Public Schools, Battleground School District, Sumner School District
- [Suspensions and expulsions in early grades](#) – Grand Coulee Dam School District
- [School construction & capital issues](#) – Issaquah School District

Finally, school directors should be aware that EHB 2242 created a brand new [School Employee Benefits Board](#) (SEBB) that moves health insurance for school employees to a single state-designed and purchase plan in the coming two years. There are at least six bills that modify provisions of the new SEBB. Two of the bills ([HB 2438](#) and [SB 6241](#)) are at the request of the Health Care Authority and just make technical corrections and changes. Two bills ([HB 2655](#) and [SB 6286](#)) were drafted and promoted by WSSDA, and would add two new members to the SEBB: one nominated by WSSDA and one nominated by the school administrators association (WASA). This improves representation on the board from school districts as the employers of the covered school employees. Two bills ([HB 2657](#) and [SB 6288](#)) would make significant policy changes to SEBB. We are still in the process of reviewing these bills.

Interested in the priorities of other state Education Associations?

[Take a look!](#)



Investing in public school facilities

Capital budget status: Both the House and Senate took steps in the first week of the session to move the capital budget and the bond authorization bill to a vote early in the session. Tuesday the [House Capital Budget Committee](#) passed [their bill](#) (HB 1075), with a reminder from the Republicans that a positive vote on the bond bill still is dependent on enacting a solution to the water policy battle (*Hirst*) that held up the capital budget at the end of the 2017 session.

Thursday, the [Senate Ways and Means Committee](#) held a public hearing and work session on implications of not yet passing a capital budget ([presentation](#), [state lay-off summary](#), [2017 SCAP project update](#)) and [their proposed bill](#) (SB 6090). [Several people testified](#) in support of enacting the capital budget as soon as possible, including [Auburn School Director Ray Vefik \(Auburn\)](#) and [Brian Sims representing WSSDA](#). WSSDA testimony included a request to consider added funding for the additional costs resulting from the delay of projects due to the lack of a capital budget. We also supported the creation of a Joint Legislative Task Force to improve funding for school construction and for enactment of the small rural schools grant program contained in [SB 5453](#). We are hearing optimism about a possible compromise regarding *Hirst*, with all sides working hard to resolve the deadlock.



School Director Ray Vefik, Auburn School Board

Simple majority in bonds: This week Senator Mullet introduced [SB 6246](#) that would move forward a constitutional amendment proposition for adjusting the threshold needed for bond passage to 55% (down from the currently required 60%). The bill was assigned to the [Senate State Government, Tribal Relations, and Elections Committee](#) and has yet to be scheduled for a hearing.

Supporting every student

The [House Education Committee](#) hosted three work sessions this week:

- [Every Student Succeeds Act implementation](#) (1/8/18, [presentation](#))
- [Expanded Learning Opportunities](#) (1/9/18, [presentation](#))
- [Interscholastic Activity Fees and Access](#) (1/11/18, [presentation](#) included presentation by [Centralia School Director Kim Ashmore](#) and [students from Tumwater High School](#))

Public hearings and discussion on bills of note:

- **Educator recruitment and retention:** [HB 1827](#) was heard in the House Education Committee on Tuesday. [Here is a summary](#) of the comprehensive bill from 2017 that addresses many policy issues related to the teacher shortage. The bill was updated over the interim to include input from many statewide stakeholder groups including [WSSDA](#). In addition, this past fall, AWSP completed a third annual survey of principals regarding local experience with teacher and substitute shortages, their [updated info graphic](#) provides a good overview of the current lay-of-the-land in buildings across the state. WSSDA is in strong support of this bill.
- **Statewide policies to support immigrants:** [SB 5689](#) addresses policies regarding immigrant's rights in the workplace (including in public schools) and was heard in the [Senate Labor and Commerce Committee](#) on Wednesday. Two bills that address eligibility for College Bound Scholarships to include individuals granted Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) status were also heard this week: [SB 5074](#) in the [Senate Higher Education Committee](#) and [HB 1488](#) in the [House Higher Education Committee](#). These bills are consistent with WSSDA's position to support students who fall under the federal DREAM Act.
- **Anti-harassment policies:** [SB 5766](#) addresses school district policies and support systems to prevent bullying, harassment, and intimidation. The bill directs districts to adopt a transgender policy/procedure and requires training for school personnel. WSSDA has created a model policy and procedure (3211 and 3211P) that aligns with current state and federal laws.
- **Breakfast after the bell:** [HB 1508](#) was the first bill to pass out of the House of Representatives this year on Wednesday; and the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee hosted a public hearing Thursday on [SB 6003](#) that would provide targeted grants to high poverty schools for the program. WSSDA has remained neutral with concerns about unfunded cost associated with this program.

State and local government issues

Washington Voting Rights Act (WVRA): A high priority for the Democratic majority in the legislature is early movement of on a WVRA. Over the years, WSSDA has weighed in on many iterations of WVRA bills. Historically WSSDA has had strong concerns regarding the limitations WVRA bills put on the ability of local school boards to establish the boundaries of their school director positions and to allow for entire communities to elect their school directors.

This year WSSDA's position is a bit different based on the evolution shown in the two bills that are under discussion: [SB 6002](#) and [HB 1800](#). It is important to note that SB 6002 is a new iteration of the WVRA, while HB 1800 is a "carry-forward" bill from 2017 with a few adjustments that were made over the interim. The bills are not companion bills. WSSDA has been actively involved with both chambers and all four caucuses in providing input on improvements shown in the bills and specific recommendations for changes that need to be made in the spirit of WSSDA's position and the efforts of school boards to represent their communities.



This week [WSSDA testified](#) neutrally [with recommendations](#) on HB 1800 in the [House State Government, Elections, and Information Technology Committee](#); and submitted written testimony to the [Senate State Government, Tribal Relations, and Elections Committee](#) in support of SB 6002, also with a [few recommendations](#). It is very important to note that in the coming days leaders will be working closely to come to compromise on the key issues and differences between the two bills. To learn more about the evolution of this issue and the uniqueness of SB 6002, check out the [work session presentation](#) from Loyola Law School voting rights professor Justin Levitt in the Senate committee this week.

THE WEEK AHEAD



The biggest day of the week for education will be Monday with public hearings on **State Assessment Graduation Requirements** in both the [House Education](#) and [Senate Early Learning & K12 Education](#) Committees. [SB 6144](#) and [HB 2621](#) both seek to fully decouple the ELA, math, and science high school state tests from being required to graduate. In addition, the Senate committee will host a work session on statewide assessments.

On Tuesday, the [House Education Committee](#) will hear several bills related to **student health and student and school safety**. The [Senate Early Learning & K12 Education Committee](#) will hear bills related to **course equivalencies, academic acceleration, and alternative learning**.

Also Tuesday, the [Senate Ways & Means Committee](#) will take action on the **capital budget** and hear three bills related to **improving the availability of retired teachers and principals to serve various roles in school districts**.

The rest of the week will consist of executive sessions, some floor action, and policy bills making their way to the necessary fiscal committee for a hearing.

[Click here](#) to check out the most current week's committee meeting schedule and an overview of key committee meeting days/times each week. To find more details on the Committee Meeting agendas, visit the [House Committee](#) or [Senate Committee](#) Web sites and click on the committee you are interested in.

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 [2017 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! Contact Jessica Vavrus (j.vavrus@wssda.org) with any questions you have about hot topics, schedules, bills, upcoming events, or the legislative process in general!

WA State Legislature

- ⇒ [2018 Legislative Contact Roster](#) (updated 1/4/18)
- ⇒ [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](#).
- [TWV](#) - TWV 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.

Education Association Partner Legislative Priorities

- [Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction \(OSPI\)](#)
- [State Board of Education \(SBE\)](#)
- [Washington Association of School Administrators \(WASA\)](#)
- [Association of Washington School Principals \(AWSP\)](#)
- [Washington State Parent Teacher Association \(WSPTA\)](#)
- [Washington Education Association \(WEA\)](#)

MARK YOUR CALENDARS!

LEGISLATIVE:

- January 8** — First day of 60-Day Session
- February 2** —Policy committee cutoff
- February 6** — Fiscal committee cutoff
- February 14** — House of Origin cutoff (5 pm)
- February 23** — Policy committee cutoff (opposite house)
- February 26**—Fiscal committee cutoff (opposite house)
- March 2** — Last day to consider opposite house bills (except budgets and matters necessary to implement the budget, and differences between the houses)
- March 8** — Last day of regular session

WSSDA-Related:

- Every Friday through March 9**—Weekly Legislative Update webinars for school board Leg. Reps.
- January 28 & 29**—WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference and Day on the Hill
- February–March**—WSSDA position streamlining process (Legislative and Resolutions Committees)
- March 15–April 30**—WSSDA legislative position solicitation process (new and continuing positions)
- March–May**—WSSDA Spring Regional Meetings



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2018 LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE AND DAY ON THE HILL

SOUTH PUGET SOUND COMMUNITY COLLEGE
AND CAPITOL CAMPUS | JANUARY 28–29

The annual WSSDA/WASA/WASBO Legislative Conference and Day on the Hill is an important partnership among school board directors, school administrators, and district business managers. On Sunday participants receive updates on shared legislative priorities and the current education policy landscape. During Monday's Day on the Hill, WSSDA's Legislative Committee has set up meetings for regional district teams to visit with their legislators. Conference attendees are an essential part of communicating shared priorities and for shaping the final outcomes of the legislative session. [Click here for more information!](#)