



This Week in Olympia

Washington Association of School Administrators

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Week 5

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**This is the 33rd day of the
Jan. 12 through April 26
2009 Regular Session
(72 to go).**

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WASA/WSSDA LEGISLATIVE CONFERENCE

THIS WEEK IN REVIEW

The week began with a rousing display of activism as almost 500 school directors, superintendents and administrators came to Olympia to share their concerns about the effects the economic crisis will have on school districts and students. Marty Brown (the Governor's Legislative Director), Randy Dorn (Superintendent of Public Instruction), Patty Wood (WSSDA's Federal Relations Network), Tom Murphy (Federal Way SD Superintendent), and Tom Aherne (Foster Pepper PLCC), provided updates on: the state's economic situation; the plan for a new assessment system; the economic stimulus bill moving through Congress; and, the Fair Funding Coalition and Network for Excellence in Schools lawsuits.

Senator Rosemary McAuliffe, chair of the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee, ranking minority committee member, Senator Curtis King, and Representative Marko Liias from the House Education Committee provided their perspectives on the important and complex issues the committees are addressing this session. The legislators' panel was followed by a briefing from WASA and WSSDA's legislative staff. They provided background and talking points on this session's hot topics: the operating and capital budgets; K-12 finance reform; and, the Senate's flexibility bills (SB 5880, 5889, 5890) proposing to repeal, suspend, or amend almost a hundred statutes. If you weren't at the WASA/WSSDA Conference, or haven't had a chance to respond to a survey we distributed on eliminating or changing current school laws, go to WASA's website, www.wasa-oly.org, log in as member, go to Member Services, and select Members Only. You will find the link to the survey there.

THIS WEEK IN REVIEW

(Cont'd)

On Tuesday, just prior to a wonderful performance by the Shelton High School Chamber Singers in the capitol rotunda, WASA and WSSDA honored the chairs of the education committees, Senator McAuliffe, Representative Dave Quall, and Representative Kathy Haigh, and thanked them for their years of service and advocacy for our schools and students.

HEARINGS/WORK SESSIONS

As committees move toward the first policy cut-off (Feb. 25), there are fewer work sessions, many, many bills being heard, and executive sessions being scheduled. The Senate education committee focused this week on bills relating to dropout retrieval, early learning, and career and technical education. The House education committee addressed bills relating to tightening dismissal or revocation provisions for school employees for certain crimes (HB 1240 and HB 1741), community involvement (HB 1762), increasing anti-harassment strategies (HB 2015), expanding options for earning high school diplomas (HB 1758), changing the assessment system (HB 1976) and giving the PESB direction to coordinate and improve efforts to bring more math and science teachers into the system (HB 2000).

On Wednesday night, the House Education Appropriations Committee heard three bills that are intended to help districts during the looming financial crisis. Chair, Rep. Kathy Haigh, wants to establish a contingency fund that would be available for loans to small districts (HB 1757) and exclude certain state forest land revenues from the basic education allocation (HB 1774). Another bill the chair is sponsoring relates to changing school levy provisions (HB 1778). (Its counterpart SB 5721 was heard in the Senate Ways and Means Committee on Tuesday.) WASA testified that we unequivocally support the provision in the bill that removes the 2011 sunset clause to a provision currently in law allowing districts to include I-728 and I-732 funding levels in levy base calculations—even if the legislature cuts those allocations in the biennial budgets. Removing the sunset clause makes this provision permanent. WASA fully supports this. A second provision adds similar allowances for salary allocations but because this provision would potentially have a significant fiscal impact by increasing levy equalization it will most likely be dropped. Our primary concern is a third provision in the bill that would allow districts to go back to their voters in the middle of a levy period with a supplemental request if state or federal legislation result in further cuts. We maintain that the financial crisis is being caused, in large part, by the state not fully funding basic education over the past thirty years and shifting the burden of covering the cost of providing basic education programs to local school districts. Since we are supposed to be initiating a plan to reform the K-12 finance system this session, giving even more responsibility to local communities to cover the shortfall caused by state cuts will only exacerbate the problem of over-reliance on local levies. In addition, opponents of the simple majority for school levies (HJR 4204—approved by the voters in 2006) testified for years—that if the simple majority passed, the state would use that approval to shift funding responsibilities to school districts. We hope this will not be the case with this legislature.

On Thursday afternoon, the Education Appropriations Committee held a work session on HB 1817. This bill would enact the recommendations of the Full Funding Coalition to reform the K-12 finance system. WASA's Executive Director, Dr. Paul Rosier (Chair of the Coalition), Jim Kowalkowski (Davenport S.D. Superintendent and member of the legislative Basic Education Finance Task Force), and Bill Freund (budget analyst for the WEA) provided an overview of the coalition's proposal. It is becoming evident that legislators themselves are frustrated with the discussions about redefining and mandating a new system of K-12 finance—which will require a lot more money—when there is no new money. The Senate has already initiated a process to create a different approach to addressing the problem this session, rather than using any of the bills currently on the table. WASA's Board approved a "[School Finance Crisis Position Statement](#)" at its meeting last Sunday.

THIS WEEK IN REVIEW

(Cont'd)

OTHER BILLS OF INTEREST HEARD THIS WEEK ...

It is important to note that while many bills are being heard, few will pass. Legislators—especially those in the budget committees—have stated that legislation requiring new funding will most likely not be passed.

SB 5449 and SB 5618. These two bills are proposals to expand programs that serve young people who have dropped out of school. The programs are run by community colleges and ESDs in collaboration with school districts. While it is clear that there is a need for these programs, what is not clear, and must be worked out during this session, is what the financial impact will be and to what extent the proposals included in the bills are actually unfunded mandates and have unintended consequences for school districts.

LAST WEEK ...

Congratulations to the twenty-four school districts that ran maintenance and operations last week—all of them passed! ([Levies/Bonds 2/09](#)) Seven would not have passed without the 2006 approval of the constitutional change to a simple majority. All three capital projects passed. Seven bonds were run—only one passed with the 60% supermajority still required for bond passage.

GOVERNOR CALLS FOR CONSOLIDATION

Speaking to the Association of Washington Business (AWB) on Monday, Governor Gregoire said she wants to consolidate small school districts. “I don’t get it. I don’t get why we have 50 (school districts) that have less than 150 students.” This is hardly a new idea. It has been tossed around for years—always gathering momentum during economic downturns. As yet, there is no valid and reliable evidence to show that there are savings significant enough to warrant the disruption forced consolidation causes to children, families and communities while studies abound demonstrating the positive effects small schools have on student learning and achievement.

<http://ruraledcenter.wsu.edu/>

Consolidation efforts can be effective when they are initiated and supported by their local communities. In addition, in Washington State, the ESDs serve a vital role in supporting small school districts by coordinating and consolidating services and programs.

FEDERAL ECONOMIC STIMULUS BILL

The agreed upon conference bill for the federal economic stimulus plan is headed to the House and Senate. President Obama hopes it will be on his desk by Monday. Washington’s share of the package is about \$4.4 billion and while details are still sketchy, the money is divided into 40 categories including Medicaid, roads, teacher retraining, technology, building modernization, higher ed construction, law enforcement, etc. that go to state and regional authorities. Our national association, AASA, is keeping close tabs on the progress of this legislation.

[Click here](#) to read Executive Director Daniel Domenech’s letter to AASA members.

Monday, 2/16/09

HEARING SCHEDULE Week of Feb 16 - 20

SENATE EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

JAC ROOM 1

1:30 - 3:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. SGA 9061 - Juanita J. Kamphuis, Member, State School for the Deaf Board of Trustees.
2. SB 5802 - Changing professional educator standards board provisions.
3. SB 5189 - Expanding the list of crimes that require dismissal or certificate revocation for school employees.
4. SB 5624 - Restricting the use of mechanical restraints and chemical sprays for discipline in public schools.
5. SB 5694 - Modifying provisions relating to record checks using fingerprints.
6. SB 5715 - Regarding residential education programs for juveniles found to be gang members.
7. SB 5935 - Regarding public school education programs for the prevention of child abuse.

EXECUTIVE SESSION:

1. SB 5880 - Providing flexibility in the education system.
2. SB 5889 - Providing flexibility in the education system.
3. SB 5890 - Providing flexibility in the education system.

HOUSE LOCAL GOVERNMENT & HOUSING

JLOB ROOM 3

1:30 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. HB 1975 - Concerning school impact fees.

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS

JLOB ROOM A

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

WORK SESSION: Governor's proposal to reinvent government and eliminate boards and commissions.

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. HB 2070 - Regarding adoption of school environmental health and safety rules.

Tuesday, 2/17/09

HOUSE EDUCATION

JLOB ROOM A

10:00 a.m - Noon

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. HB 2113 - Regarding placements of students in residential habilitation centers.
2. HB 2119 - Expanding dual credit opportunities
3. HB 2094 - Limiting the use of capital levy proceeds to support direct costs associated with technology systems and support.
4. HB 2148 - Implementing strategies to address the achievement gap.
5. HB 2167 - Providing flexibility in the education system.

**HEARING SCHEDULE
Week of Feb 16 - 20**

(Cont'd)

HOUSE CAPITAL BUDGET

JLOB ROOM C

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

WORK SESSION:

1. K-12 and Higher Education Construction and Renovation: Potential use of federal funds for construction or rehabilitation, including energy efficiency and health and safety projects throughout the state.

Wednesday, 2/18/09

SENATE EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

JAC ROOM 1

8:00 - 10:00 a.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. SB 5631 - Feeding hungry children through school breakfast and lunch programs and summer food service programs.
2. SB 5779 - Regarding adoption of school environmental health and safety rules.
3. SB 5738 - Requiring the office of the superintendent of public instruction.
4. SB 5914 - Concerning student transportation funding.
5. SB 5918 - Regarding paraeducator tutor certification.
6. SB 5958 - Regarding vision screening for public school students.

HOUSE EDUCATION

JLOB ROOM A

1:30 p.m - 3:30 p.m.

Possible executive session.

SENATE WAYS & MEANS

JAC ROOM 4

1:30 - 3:30 p.m

Possible executive session.

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS

JLOB ROOM A

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. HB 1940 - Requiring that school district and educational service district employees' basic benefits be determined and administered by the state health care authority.

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

JAC ROOM 3

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. SB 5176 - Creating a bi-state partnership for teachers of children with visual impairment.
2. Revitalizing financial aid [S-1473.1].

SENATE JUDICIARY

JAC ROOM 1

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. SB 5946 - Protecting freedom of student press and speech.

**HEARING SCHEDULE
Week of Feb 16 - 20**

(Cont'd)

HOUSE EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

JLOB ROOM A 6:00 - 8:00 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. HB 2041 - Concerning student transportation funding.
2. SHB 1129 - Establishing a lifelong learning account steering committee.
3. HB 1969 - Promoting predictable funding for school districts that provide residential education.

SENATE EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

JAC ROOM 1 6:00 - 8:00 p.m
Possible executive session.

Thursday, 2/19/09

HOUSE FINANCE

JLOB ROOM C 8:00 - 10:00 a.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

HB 2110 - Requiring a tax expenditure report as part of the biennial budget documents.

HOUSE STATE GOVERNMENT & TRIBAL AFFAIRS

JLOB ROOM D 8:00 - 10:00 a.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

HJR 4202 - Amending the Constitution to allow seventeen year olds to vote in a primary if they will be eighteen years old by the next general election, and the primary is being held to select the candidates for the November general election.

SENATE EARLY LEARNING & K-12 EDUCATION

JAC ROOM 1 10:00 a.m - Noon

PUBLIC HEARING:

1. SGA 9144 - Edwin Snook, Member, Board of Trustees, State School for the Blind.
2. SB 5828 - Authorizing certain school districts and educational service districts to designate a district treasurer.
3. SB 5887 - Implementing a proposed constitutional amendment to change school levy timing provisions.
4. SJR 8213 - Amending the state Constitution to change school levy election timing provisions.
5. SB 5774 - Regarding school levy equalization.

HOUSE EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS

JLOB ROOM A 1:30 - 3:30 p.m

WORK SESSION:

Early learning programs.

HOUSE WAYS & MEANS

JLOB ROOM A 3:30 - 5:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

SHB 1098 - Regarding computing the rate of vacation leave accrual for state employees formerly employed by a school district.

**HEARING SCHEDULE
Week of Feb 16 - 20**

(Cont'd)

SENATE HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

JAC ROOM 1

3:30 - 5:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

SB 5881 - Changing provisions involving truancy.

Friday, 2/20/09

HOUSE EDUCATION

JLOB ROOM A

8:00 - 10:00 a.m

Possible executive session.

SENATE HIGHER EDUCATION & WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

JAC ROOM 3

1:30 - 3:30 p.m

PUBLIC HEARING:

PUBLIC HEARING:

SB 5773 - Establishing the opportunity internship program for high school students.

BILL WATCH

The Bill Watch tracks education related bills. A bill's journey to become a law changes as it is heard in committees and then either dies or moves to the floor of the House or Senate. If it passes there, it crosses over to the other side and goes through the same process. The first cut-off - for bills to be out of their committee of origin - is Feb. 25. A bill must be signed by the Governor before it becomes a law. Information about each bill - including sponsors, bill digests, bill reports, amendments, actions, and history can be found by clicking on the link below.

BILL WATCH

Click [HERE](#) to see the 2009 Session Cut-off Calendar.

**RETIREMENT/HEALTH
BENEFITS**

All eleven school employee bills connected with the Select Committee on Pension Policy's (SCPP) recommended bills have now been given a hearing in the House Ways & Means Committee. Six of the bills have been given executive action and have moved to the House Rules Committee. The Senate Ways and Means Committee has not given a hearing to most of the companion SCPP bills.

Hearings were held this week on three health care bills that could impact school employees. These were: SB 6869, Health Care Authority (statute changes impacting bargaining units served by the PEBB), SB 5515, Basic Benefit Additions (adds HSAs and HRAs to basic benefit options), and SB 5491, Employees Required into HCA (requires school districts/ESDs to purchase health benefits through the HCA Public Employee Benefits Board (PEBB) plans by January 1, 2010). OSPI Superintendent Randy Dorn, together with other district administrators, spoke in favor of such a move. Opposition came from WEA and PSE. Senator Brandland, sponsor of SB 5491, is working on a bill amendment to deal with concerns over possible costs associated with part-time employees. Thus far the bill has no fiscal note.

Next Wednesday, February 18th, a bill similar to SB 5491, HB 1940 is scheduled for a hearing in the House Ways & Means Committee. This bill sets the beginning date to bring K-12 into the PEBB as of September 1, 2011.

HB 1601, a high priority bill for our association, is scheduled for a House Ways & Means hearing on Thursday, February 19th. This bill allows Plan 2 members with 20 or more years of service and at least age 55 to have access to PEBB health plans when separating from service and not beginning to draw their pension.

RETIREMENT & HEALTH BENEFITS

Cont'd.

AEA

Several health bills that would impact all Washington's residents, including public employees, have been introduced and some have received hearings. SB 5945 and SB 5947 were given a hearing in the Senate Health and Long/Term Care Committee this week.

An updated [Retirement/Health Benefit bill watch](#) is available on our association's web site.

Nancy Moffatt, the new Executive Director of WASBO, met with a number of senators and representatives on Wednesday regarding the basic education funding bills (HB 1410/SB 5444 and HB 1817/SB 5607). The issue of fully funding K-12 basic education is a high priority for WASBO as well as AEA. Moffatt told the lawmakers that WASBO is willing to provide technical financial information to legislators as they craft a basic ed funding bill which lays the groundwork for eventual full funding.

WAMOA assisted Rep. Scott White with amendments to HB 1619 which would allow school districts to run two to six-year capital levies for major equipment repair and preventative maintenance which help increase the useful life of school buildings. The Capital Budget Committee moved the bill out of its committee on Monday afternoon by a unanimous vote.

WSNA has been working with Rep. Pat Sullivan this week on HB 1416, the feeding hungry kids bill, as it is scheduled to move out of House Education on Friday. They are helping Sullivan look at different options which would result in more reduced price elementary students eating lunch. Also, they will testify on the companion bill, SB 5361, which will be heard in Senate Early Learning/K-12 Education on Wednesday, Feb. 18.

On Friday, AEA testified in opposition to SB 5384, high performance buildings, which would require a "globes standard" for school buildings, and require wood for structures that are four or more stories high. WAMOA feels that the schools already are complying with the WA Sustainable School Protocol which complies with the LEED silver standard or "globes standard." The requirement of using wood would increase cost and limit flexibility.

KEEPING UP WITH THE LEGISLATIVE SESSION

You can contact legislators using the Legislative Hotline 1-800-562-6000 or by going to the legislature's website: <http://www.leg.wa.gov>

TVW
<http://www.twv.org/index.cfm?bhcp=1>

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