Washington State School Directors' Association

Legislative Update

January 22, 2016

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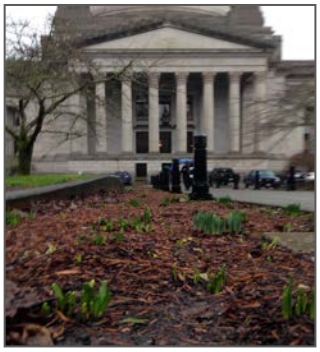
(for a pdf version of this update, visit the WSSDA Legislative Updates Web page)

Rain Helps the Seeds Sprout and the Gardens Grow



If you were in Olympia this week, you know what I am talking about! Galoshes (though I didn't see any) would have been useful for wading through the puddles on the hill and through the myriad of topics covered in the House and Senate. Since this is a short session the first bill cut-offs are coming soon (Feb. 5th for Policy Committees and Feb. 9 for Fiscal Committees) and everyone is rushing to get their bills heard. The seeds are certainly being sown – and we will see in a little over a week which seeds (annuals or perennials) have sprouted roots that will hold and which will be weeded out…

This week I continued building relationships with policy makers and their staff from both sides of the aisle. I've learned that several legislators, many former school board members plan to attend the reception at the up-coming WASA/WSSDA/WASBO Legislative Conference. Hopefully many of you and/or your Legislative Representatives are attending on January 31 – Feb. 1. In addition to the hot topics of the moment, I continued sharing WSSDA's 2016 Legislative Priorities and exploring how WSSDA can most effectively support policy makers with their goals this session. To refresh your memory on where WSSDA members landed in prioritizing our positions on the gamut of K-12 policy issues, visit WSSDA's Legislative Priorities and Positions Web page.

WSSDA expressed our support or cautions on several topics ranging from opportunity gap issues and social emotional supports for students to the easing the impending levy cliff and plans to address the state's basic education obligations to protections for students' freedom of expression. As you know, WSSDA has developed a full suite of model policies and procedures for school districts to consider when adopting or updating local policies. This week several bills cited the expectation for WSSDA to develop new model policies and I was again heartened, that low and behold, we already have them! Specific requests were made related to student discipline, classroom management, electronic resources, and freedom of expression.

Week 3 is already shoring up to be one where seeds will be sown. The seed packets for this week primarily address teacher and substitute shortage issues; and assessment graduation requirements. In addition, the House Local Government will host a hearing on Public Records Act requests; the House Environment will host a hearing concerning synthetic turf hazards; and House State Government will host one supporting voter registration or preregistration for 17 year-olds in high school social studies or civics courses. Undoubtedly it will be a fast and full week

Here are updates on WSSDA's 2016 Legislative Priorities and other "hot topics" this session:

2016 WSSDA Priority Area: **Learning Space for Every Student**	
2016 Priority Area and Key Topics	**Updates and Associated Policy Proposals**
• Simple majority in bond elections • Actual costs of school construction • Growth Management Act (GMA) (allowing for school siting outside of Urban Growth Areas)	While not on the schedule this coming week, there are indications that there may be a public hearing the week of our Legislative Conference. In addition, prime sponsor, Mia Gregerson hosted a stakeholder meeting this past Friday that WSSDA and other district stakeholders participated in to plan a communications strategy on this topic. To refresh your memories on what happened last session on this topic, Rep. Gregerson sponsored House Joint Resolution (HJR 4210) and HB 1941 that received a hearing on February 16, 2015. To watch the hearing from last year on TVW, click here and watch from minutes 33 – 53 and 1:27 – 1:33. Regarding the GMA and school siting issues, the House Local Government Committee hosted a work session on the recommendations that resulted from the Dec. 2015 School Siting Taskforce report and HB 1420 from last session. Bethel and Richland School Districts shared their stories on this topic. In particular, the presentation that Tom Seigel from Bethel shared was a great primer on the topic for a statewide conversation. Unfortunately the committee chair is not planning to move a bill, however the Senate now has a bill introduced (SB 6426) and we will continue to encourage a public hearing there.

2016 WSSDA Priority Area: **Ample and Dependable Funding**	
2016 Priority Area and Key Topics	**Updates and Associated Policy Proposals**
• Full funding for Basic Ed • Levy Reform - Address the levy cliff with a safe harbor period - Levy equalization	This week bills were heard in both the House (Appropriations) and Senate (Early Learning and K-12 Education) regarding the state's basic education obligations (HB 2366 and SB 6195). Basically both bills establish an Education Funding Taskforce to further study, collect data, and make recommendations to the Legislature on implementing the program of basic education. WSSDA testified in support of these bills, however we also expressed concern that they do not take more definitive action this session. We also recommended that the Taskforce engage technical experts from school districts (such as superintendents and business officers) in further fleshing out the plan that must be acted upon in the 2017 session. Bills were also heard in both Houses to extend the levy cliff beyond 2017. The Senate heard SB 6353 and SB 6183 while the House heard HB 2698 (this bill is a companion to SB 6353 and replaced HB 2361 that had a technical error in the original bill). WSSDA supported all of these bills as is it is critical to ease down the cliff versus throwing districts off it. We expressed more support for the shorter extension window offered in SB 6353 and HB 2698 to continue to press on the Legislature for urgency in dealing with full funding issues. Another topic close to the hearts of many of your districts is related to the potential revenues for school districts generated by **federal forest lands**. Historically (until this year), the amount of each district's revenue has been deducted from the amount of the district's basic education apportionment amount. While this year districts eligible to receive these funds will receive the full revenues due to them (thanks to a budget line item inserted by

	legislature to secure the elimination of the revenue deductions and to allow for the revenues to flow to the districts that are eligible to receive them. The two bills that are in play this session are SB 6292 and HB 2295. The Senate Bill has been referred to the Senate's Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee and the House Bill has been referred to the House Appropriations Committee. ***As the window is closing for bills to be heard and to pass out of committee, it is critical that at least one of the bills get a hearing.*** WSSDA staff and partners will do what we can to advocate for this, but we need your support in reaching out to your policy makers on the committees in question to at least get a hearing soon.

2016 Priority Area: **Great Teachers in Every Classroom**	
2016 Priority Area and Key Topics	**Updates and Associated Policy Proposals**
• PD is critical part of Basic Education (96 hours – focus on cultural competency; equity) • State bargained and state funded salaries	Next week is the week of teacher and substitute shortage bills. Monday, the House Education Committee bills that address teacher recruitment/retention (HB 2383), and an OSPI request bill (HB 2573) that puts in place efforts to comprehensively address the teacher shortage issue. Tuesday is the Senate's teacher shortage discussion day. The Early Learning and K-12 Committee will hear bills related to expanding careers in education (SB 6455), teacher recruitment and retention (SB 6241-Governor Inslee's request), and the companion bill to HB 2573, SB 6332. WSSDA is supportive of OSPI's request. Visit OSPI's Legislative Budget and Policy Request to gain a full picture of this request. You will recall that both Houses conducted recent work sessions on this topic. On January14th, the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee conducted a work session; and last Monday, January 18th, the House conducted a work session with the PESB on this topic. Specific to the substitute shortage issue, SHB 1737 was revived from last year to facilitate the availability of retired teachers as substitutes. This bill received a public hearing this week in the House Appropriations Committee and is still awaiting a vote. Finally, HB 1345 (statewide definition of professional learning) was heard in the House Appropriations Committee and is awaiting a vote. Further, this coming week, SB 5415 will be heard in the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Committee that advocates for one full day for professional learning for certificated teachers.

Other Top of Mind Issues to Follow

- **Charter Schools:** As anticipated, the school conversation is moving quickly. This week the Senate Ways and Means Committee hosted a public hearing and voted SB 6194 out of committee and onto the floor for debate. After significant debate on the Senate Floor with several amendments offered (mostly related to funding source, name changes, and a couple of other minor adjustments), the bill passed by a vote of 27-20. Now the bill will move to the house for consideration. Unfortunately the bill in its current form is still not one that aligns with WSSDA priorities as it maintains the external Charter School Commission, in addition to allow for districts to be authorizers. There is some indication in the house that there might be some room for discussion.
- **Opportunity Gap and Student Social Emotional Supports:** This week several bills moved in the

(enacting recommendations from the Educational Opportunity Gap Oversight and Accountability Commission (EOGOAC)), and HB 1682 (supporting in-school guidance supports, housing stability, and identification services for homeless students). Additionally, the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee hosted hearings on similar issues: SB 6192 (enacting recommendations from the EOGOAC) and SB 6244 (addressing student data, expanding nutrition opportunities, student discipline, teacher loan repayment, recruitment and retention of educators, teacher bonuses, and instructing English language learners – but not the professional learning components of the EOGOAC bills). Chair Litzow indicated a desire to find a collaborative middle ground between the two bills, however no action was taken on either by the end of the week. The Senate also heard SB 6298 that would enact the homeless student stability and opportunity gap act. Dave Larson, board member from Tukwila testified in support of SB 6298 as one vehicle for supporting some of our most needy students.

Next week, the House will hear HB 2409 (regarding transition plan support for students with IEPs and Section 504 plans) and the Senate will hear SB 6432 (supporting ESDs to provide training and assistance for evaluating student mental health services).

- **Public Records Act Requests:** Following last week's work session in the House Local Government Committee (where your colleagues from North Mason and South Whidbey presented), a bill was introduced (HB 2576) that revises the public records act with regard to requests to local agencies; creates the public records commission to administer the provisions of the public records act; authorizes public agencies to recover their costs for public records requests by charging a reasonable fee when records are requested for the purpose of sale or resale; and creates the dedicated open records account. District leaders from Richland, Marysville, Monroe, and hopefully Prosser will come to Olympia to share their stories in support of this bill next week during the public hearing in the House Local Government Committee.
- **High School Graduation Assessment Requirements:** Last Monday, the House Appropriations Committee hosted a public hearing on HB 2214 from last session (sponsored by Rep. Reykdal, D-Olympia). You'll recall this bill delinks high school assessments from graduation requirements; streamlines alternative assessments (and eliminates Collection of Evidence); increases the use of High School and Beyond Plans; and encourages 12th Grade transition courses in English and mathematics. WSSDA testified in support of this bill. Next week, in the House Education Committee on Tuesday, several bills on this topic will also be heard – many of which carry forward some components with minor adjustments of HB 2214. The bills include HB 2429, 2556, 2734, 2743, and 1666. For more specifics on these bills, check out WSSDA's Bill Watch List for from 1/22/16 or the bills themselves.
- **Voter Rights Act:** HB 1745 was heard in the House State Government Committee on Tuesday, the 19th. WSSDA Executive Director, Alan Burke testified against the bill as is consistent with our organization's stance on the topic. To hear the full public hearing, click here. WSSDA has taken a "con" position to this bill in the past and will continue to do so (as was prioritized during the 2015 Legislative Assembly) given our commitment to maintaining local control. We believe the current federal VRA provides a sufficient legal remedy to the issues addressed in the House Bill.
- **Miscellaneous Topics:** Other topics of some interest popped up this week and others continue to arise for next week. These included hearings this week on students' freedom of expression and district policies on the topic (SB 6233) and on digital citizenship education (SB 6273); and

on Jan. 27th in House Environment) and voter preregistration/registration of 17 year old students in high school civics courses (HB 2707 – hearing on Jan. 28th in House State Government). Finally, a bill related to additional pay for school board members (SB 6459) will be heard in the Senate Early Learning and K-12 Education Committee on Thursday.

So moving into Week 3, let's not let the torrential rain discourage us. These rainy days are perfect for being proactive with our garden plans and digging out our gloves for the spring planting. As I sort out my gloves, a quote from author Pat Schroeder comes to my mind, "***You can't wring your hands and roll up your sleeves at the same time."*** Let's use our time in the coming weeks with our policy makers to arm them with the real story about the issues they are grappling with so that they can be ready to roll up their sleeves when the time arises. Have a great week!

Stay Connected!

- WSSDA Legislative Updates (includes weekly Bill Watch List)
- WA State Legislature
- Committee Agendas
- Session Cut-Off Calendar
- Committee Meeting Planners: House Senate
- Bill Tracking – log-in on the Legislature's web site to receive regular updates on the bills you are most interested in
- This Week in Olympia: Dan Steele's weekly updates to WASA members include good information that is relevant to many topics that WSSDA members also care about.
- AWSP's Weekly Legislative Updates: If you are interested in seeing legislative issues through the eyes of school principals, Jerry's updates will provide you the insight you need!

Key Dates to Remember – 60 Day Session:

- **Feb. 5th:** Policy Cut-off in the House of Origin
- Feb. 9th: Fiscal Cut-off in the House of Origin
- Feb. 17: House of Origin Cut-off
- Feb. 26th: Policy Cut-off in the Opposite House
- Feb. 29th: Fiscal Cut-off in the Opposite House
- March 4th: Opposite House Cut-off
- March 10th: LAST DAY OF SESSION!

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