Capitol News

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# WSLHA Priorities

Great news! [HB 1001](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1001&Initiative=false&Year=2023), the Audiologist/Speech-Language Pathologist **licensure compact** bill, **passed the Senate unanimously** last Wednesday! It will now go to the Governor for his signature into law.

More great news on [HB 1222](https://lawfilesext.leg.wa.gov/biennium/2023-24/Pdf/Bills/House%20Bills/1222.pdf?q=20230115205537), legislation that mandates large group insurance plan coverage (employers with more than 50 employees) for **hearing instruments and the services** necessary to fit them. This bill **passed the Senate unanimously** last Friday! It will return to the House for a concurrence vote in the Senate amendments.

[HB 1508](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1508&Chamber=House&Year=2023) is legislation regarding the **Health Care Cost Transparency Board.** It did not pass the Senate Health & Long Term Care Committee before last Wednesday’s cutoff. It will not be considered further this session.

The Legislature is considering several bills dealing with **special education funding**.

* [HB 1436](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1436&Initiative=false&Year=2023) is OSPI-request legislation that would lift the special education cap by the 2027-28 school year. It was amended in the Early Learning & K12 Committee and is **now a study bill. All provisions regarding the special education cap have been removed.** The bill now:
	+ Directs OSPI to annually review data to ensure there is not a disproportionate identification of students;
	+ Requires OSPI to provide technical assistance to school districts experiencing issues related to disproportionality and make professional development opportunities available to promote inclusionary teaching practices.
	+ Requires JLARC and the State Auditor to conduct a performance audit of the state's system of providing special education.
	+ This bill was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee last Friday. It is scheduled for executive session on Tuesday.
* [SB 5311](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=5311&Initiative=false&Year=2023) is Governor-request legislation. This bill is now the special education funding bill moving forward. It **increases special education cost multipliers** over a 4-year period and increases the **funding cap to 15%.** It was heard in the House Appropriations Committee on Saturday. It is scheduled for executive session on Tuesday.
* [HB 1109](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1109&Initiative=false&Year=2023) increases the **reimbursement for initial evaluations and IEPs** during the summers of 2023, 2023, and 2025. It was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee last Tuesday. It is scheduled for executive session on Tuesday.

[HB 1565](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1565&Year=2023&Initiative=false), the bill that originally addressed professional education workforce recruitment and retention, including the Beginning Educator Support Team (BEST) program, was amended in the Early Learning & K12 Committee. **It no longer incudes the BEST program. It is now focused solely on the teacher residency program.** This bill was heard in the Senate Ways & Means Committee last Friday. It is scheduled for executive session on Tuesday.

[HB 1479](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1479&Year=2023&Initiative=false) related **to restraint and isolation of students** did not pass the Senate Early Learning & K12 Committee before last Wednesday’s cutoff. This bill will not be considered further this session. However, there may be funding in the final budget to establish a pilot in select school districts.

# General News

With trees and flowers blooming on the Capitol campus, it’s a reminder that the legislative session is entering its final weeks. There are three weeks left to go, with the pace quickening to meet the upcoming fiscal committee cutoff on Tuesday and floor cutoff on April 12th.

A week after the Senate operating and capital budgets were released, House budget leaders rolled out their proposals last Monday. Overall, House leaders spend more in their plans. Called “Resilient Washington,” the $69.5 billion House operating budget makes investments in the following areas: behavioral health provider rates; early learning programs; K12 teachers; special education funding; food assistance; emergency housing and rental assistance; and natural resources.

The House Appropriations Committee passed the House budget early Thursday morning, with a floor vote scheduled for Monday. The Senate passed their budget last Wednesday, with a notable bipartisan vote of 40-9. Once the House passes its budget, negotiations begin between the chambers to finalize one budget that can pass both the House and Senate.

**Upcoming Dates**

April 4 - Fiscal committee cutoff - opposite house

April 12 - Floor cutoff - opposite house

April 23 - Sine Die