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’s on its way 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 has **passed the Senate** and will return to the House for a concurrence vote in the Senate amendments.

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 regarding special education.The bill has changed over the course of the session and has become a study bill, directing OSPI to study and provide technical assistance to school districts on disproportionate identification of students. It also requires JLARC and the State Auditor to conduct a performance audit of the state's system of providing special education.
  + This bill passed the Senate Ways & Means Committee on Tuesday. It is now in the Senate Rules Committee.
* [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 passed the House Appropriations Committee on Tuesday. It is now in the House Rules Committee.
* [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 did not pass the Senate Ways & Means Committee before last Tuesday’s cutoff. **It is likely dead for the session.**
* [HB 1565](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1565&Year=2023&Initiative=false), the bill that is **now focused solely on the teacher residency program,** did not pass the Senate Ways & Means Committee before last Tuesday’s cutoff. **It is likely dead for the session.**

# General News

After wrapping up preliminary floor action on budgets and fiscal committee work earlier this week, the House and Senate returned to full-time floor action on Wednesday. Because policy bills must now pass the floor in the opposite chamber by April 12th, legislators will spend long days and nights ahead in floor debate.

As a rule, bills must pass both the House and Senate with the same language. A bill that is not amended in the opposite chamber goes straight to the Governor (after being signed by the Speaker and the President of the Senate). A bill that is amended by the opposite chamber, however, must return to the house of origin for approval of those amendments. Sometimes this is an easy process where the house of origin concurs with the amendment and the bill is on its way to the Governor.

Sometimes, the house of origin does not concur with these amendments. In this case, the house of origin asks the opposite chamber to recede from the amendments (thereby reverting to the language that the house of origin approved). If the opposite chamber recedes, the bill is on its way to the Governor. If it refuses to recede, one chamber can request a conference committee to negotiate a final agreement.

Conference committees are made up of three legislators from each chamber (2 majority party, one minority party). Once the conferees come to agreement, the final language is presented to both chambers and cannot be amended. It’s an up-or-down vote. The conference committee process is used for the budget and other issues disputed between the chambers. Bills have until April 23rd to pass this final step.

**Upcoming Dates**

April 12 - Floor cutoff - opposite house

April 23 - Sine Die