Capitol News

April 15, 2023

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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, was signed into law by Governor Inslee on Thursday!**It becomes effective on July 23rd. [**You can watch the bill signing here**](https://tvw.org/video/governor-jay-inslee-bill-signing-2023041184/?eventID=2023041184).

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 is on its way to the Governor for his approval.

The Senate consolidated the **special education funding bills into one bill,** [**HB 1436**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1436&Initiative=false&Year=2023). HB 1436 combines the study policies of HB 1436 and the funding policies of SB 5311. These changes must be approved by the House:

* 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.
* Increases the special education excess cost multipliers for pre-K and K-12 students.
* Increases the special education enrollment funding cap from 13.5 percent to 15 percent.
* Allows the Safety Net Oversight Committee to consider differences in program costs that are attributable to service delivery choices.
* Provides that the average per-pupil expenditure used to determine safety net award eligibility for high-need students is 2 times the average per pupil expenditure for districts with fewer than 1,000 students and 2.2 times the average per-pupil expenditure for districts with 1,000 or more students, beginning in the 2023-24 school year.
* Requires the Office of Education Ombuds to delegate special education ombuds to serve as a resource for students and their parents, subject to appropriations.
* Directs the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop an allocation and cost accounting methodology that ensures state general apportionment funding is allocated to a student's special education program when basic education services are provided in an alternative setting and report to the Legislature.

# General News

Over the last week, legislators spent busy days and nights passing high-profile bills in advance of last Wednesday’s deadline for bills to pass the opposite chamber. These bills include advisory votes (SB 5082); assault-style weapons (HB 1240); plastics (HB 1085); ergonomics (SB 5217); firearm industry members (SB 5078); and domestic violence (HB 1715).

On Monday, the Senate passed HB 1469, the “Shield Law.” This bill protects healthcare providers from harassment for providing protected healthcare services. It also prohibits the issuance of out-of-state subpoenas seeking information related to abortion & reproductive health care services and prohibits the Governor from extraditing any person for out-of-state charges regarding reproductive health care services. It now goes to the Governor for his approval.

The “Shield Law” is part of a bold priority package of bills introduced by House and Senate Democrats this session that would regulate health data (HB 1155); eliminate co-pays and deductible requirements for abortion (SB 5242), and block out-of-state disciplinary action against providers of reproductive care (HB 1340).

In response to a March 30th ruling by a federal judge in Texas that insurers and employers are not required to cover the cost of cancer screenings and other preventive care required under the ACA, the House introduced a symbolic [**HB 1855**](https://app.leg.wa.gov/billsummary?BillNumber=1855&Initiative=false&Year=2023) last week. This bill assures that preventive care under the ACA will be covered without patient cost-sharing requirements.

This week, the House and Senate will spend their time negotiating the differences in bills that have passed both chambers but in different forms. And, of course, all eyes will be on the final negotiated budget which we will (hopefully) see midweek.

The Legislature is scheduled to adjourn on Sunday, April 23rd.