Finding Your Voice:
The Importance of Legislative Advocacy
Legislative Advocacy

• WHY
  • Motivation/rationale to engage

• HOW
  • Building relationships
  • Constant contact

• WHAT
  • Policy items
  • Budget requests
WHY Should I Engage?
Legislative Advocacy: Why Be Engaged?

If YOU don’t advocate for your students, your district and your staff, who will?
Nature abhors a vacuum

~Aristotle
Nature abhors a vacuum: whenever people do not know the truth, they fill the gaps with conjecture

~George Bernard Shaw
The Importance of Engagement

• You can be sure someone WILL speak up—and they may not have the same information, experience or position as you

• You can’t let the legislative vacuum be filled with voices that do not reflect your knowledge, experience and opinions
OH SO YOU'RE A POLITICIAN WHO HAS NEVER TAUGHT A CLASS?

TELL ME MORE ABOUT HOW SCHOOLS SHOULD BE RUN
Legislative Engagement

• Your legislators may hold themselves out as education “experts,” but likely have little background in school district issues.

• Part of your job as a school administrator is to educate legislators, making sure they understand how their decisions in Olympia affect your school district—your students, your staff, your academic program, your budget, etc.

• Remember, YOU are the education “expert” and a valuable resource to legislators.
Legislative Engagement

• WASA will provide you resources, tools and assistance; however, YOU are in a position to establish trust and credibility with legislators—so they will go to you for information and advice.

• You are also in a position to explain the complexities of public education and your specific needs. And only YOU can “tell your story.” Build data to make your case; however, frame your “ask” with a local story; personalize issues with names of students, teachers, school buildings. Stories Stick!
HOW Should I Advocate?
Effective Advocacy

Be informed:

• about the *PROCESS*

• about the *ISSUES*

• about the *PLAYERS*
Be Informed About the Process

How a Bill Becomes Law:

aka

“Structured Chaos”
THE COURSE OF A BILL
Published by the Senate and The House of Representatives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>THE SENATE</th>
<th>THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES</th>
<th>EXECUTIVE OFFICIALS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>INTRODUCING MEMBER</td>
<td>FOR FILING</td>
<td>CHIEF CLERK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REPLIED TO STANDING COMMITTEE</td>
<td>SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>REFERRED TO APPROPRIATE STANDING COMMITTEE</td>
<td>HOUSE STANDING COMMITTEES</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>CONSIDERED BY APPROPRIATE STANDING COMMITTEE</td>
<td>RULES CALENDAR COMMITTEE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TO BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR FOR SECOND READING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TO BE PLACED ON THE CALENDAR FOR THIRD READING</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READING AND RECORD OF COMMITTEE REPORT</td>
<td>READING AND RECORD OF COMMITTEE REPORT</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>READ SECOND TIME SECTION BY SECTION</td>
<td>READ SECOND TIME SECTION BY SECTION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>THIRD READING AND FINAL PASSAGE</td>
<td>THIRD READING AND FINAL PASSAGE</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CERTIFICATION</td>
<td>CERTIFICATION</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The above procedure for a noncommittee bill introduced in the Senate is the simplest possible, neither veto nor amendment has occurred. If such a bill is introduced in the House, the Chief Clerk would perform essentially the same functions as the Secretary of the Senate as indicated above, and the action of the Senate thereon would occur after passage thereof by the House.
COVID-19 Update: Access to Capitol Campus facilities may be limited during the COVID-19 response. For the latest facilities information, please visit the Department of Enterprise Services COVID-19 Information page. For general information about the response, please visit the Washington State Coronavirus Response page.

What's happening on the floor?
The 2020 Regular Session adjourned sine die on March 12, 2020.
The 2021 Regular Session will convene on Monday, January 11, 2021.

Please check the Committee Schedules website for the most up-to-date information concerning individual committee meeting dates and agendas.

Scheduled hearings and floor sessions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Last Updated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JLARC Subcommittee for SAO Performance Audits</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>12/3/2020 10:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/25/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highlights

Legislative Hotline: 1.800.562.6000

Governor's Bill Action: Unless specified otherwise in the bill, the enacted bills will go into effect 90 days from the end of the session, which is June 11, 2020.
Committee Meeting Agendas, Schedules, and Documents
Committee meetings you may filter by date, chamber, and committee and view by schedule, agenda, or bill.

Calendars

**Session Cutoff Calendar**
Relates calendar dates to legislative days and notes session deadlines for committees and floor action.

**Senate Weekly Meeting Schedules / Floor Schedules**
Links to weekly PDF files of the Senate schedule.

**Floor Activity Reports**
Bills currently being debated on the floor in the House and Senate (updated in real time), bills scheduled for floor debate with links to amendments, histories, bill text, and roll call votes.

**Bill Introductions**
Lists all introductions in the current calendar year.

**Capitol Campus Activities and Events**
Calendar of Events on the Capitol Campus (goes to Dept. of Enterprise Services website)
Be Informed About the Issues

- **WASA**: [www.wasa-oly.org](http://www.wasa-oly.org)
- **Education Associations**:  
  - **WASBO**: [www.wasbo.org](http://www.wasbo.org)  
  - **WSSDA**: [www.wssda.org](http://www.wssda.org)  
  - **AWSP**: [www.awsp.org](http://www.awsp.org)  
  - **WEA**: [www.washingtonea.org](http://www.washingtonea.org)  
  - **PTA**: [www.wastatepta.org](http://www.wastatepta.org)
- **Education Agencies**:  
  - **OSPI**: [www.k12.wa.us](http://www.k12.wa.us)  
  - **SBE**: [www.sbe.wa.gov](http://www.sbe.wa.gov)  
  - **PESB**: [www.pesb.wa.gov](http://www.pesb.wa.gov)
- **Legislative-related**:  
  - **Legislature Homepage**: [www.leg.wa.gov](http://www.leg.wa.gov)  
  - **Governor’s Homepage**: [www.governor.wa.gov](http://www.governor.wa.gov)  
  - **LEAP (Budget info)**: [www.fiscal.wa.gov](http://www.fiscal.wa.gov)
2020 End of Session Report Includes:

- Comprehensive review of 2020 Supplemental Operating Budget
- Comprehensive review of 2020 Supplemental Capital Budget
- Detailed review of all education-related bills adopted in 2020
- Summary of all education-related bills that died in 2020

https://bit.ly/3dxT7jY
2020 Legislative Session Guide

A publication of the Washington Association of School Administrators

Available after Session begins

All issues archived at: www.wasa-oly.org/TWIO
WASA Legislative Podcast

 Archived Podcasts and Subscription Information: https://bit.ly/2QlgWT0
Be Informed About the Players

• Legislators:
  • What District?
  • What Committee assignments?
  • Leadership position?
  • Issues of interest/expertise?
  • Personal information: occupation, social/civic memberships, schools attended, church affiliation, hobbies
COVID-19 Update: Access to Capitol Campus facilities may be limited during the COVID-19 response. For the latest facilities information, please visit the Department of Enterprise Services COVID-19 Information page. For general information about the response, please visit the Washington State Coronavirus Response page.

What's happening on the floor?

Please check the Committee Schedules website for the most up-to-date information concerning individual committee meeting dates and agendas.

Scheduled hearings and floor sessions:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Committee</th>
<th>Agenda</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Last Updated</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>JLARC Subcommittee for SAO Performance Audits</td>
<td>Agenda</td>
<td>12/3/2020 10:00 AM</td>
<td></td>
<td>11/25/2020</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Highlights

Legislative Hotline: 1.800.562.6000

Governor's Bill Action: Unless specified otherwise in the bill, the enacted bills will go into effect 90 days from the end of the session, which is June 11, 2020.
Be Informed About the Players

• Additional Players in the process:
  • Legislator’s personal staff
  • Committee staff
  • Caucus staff
  • Agency liaisons
  • Lobbyists
How to be Heard in Olympia

Can You Hear Me?
How to be Heard in Olympia

• Contacting your legislators
  • Face-to-face (or electronic) meetings
  • Personal letters
  • Phone calls
  • E-mail
  • Public testimony
Meeting with Your Legislator(s)

• Tips:
  • Schedule meeting well in advance
  • Note subject matter and attendees
  • Do your homework (*know the process; issues; and players*)
  • Prepare presentation or outline; select spokesperson
  • Introduce yourself and/or team
Meeting with Your Legislator(s)

• Tips, cont’d:
  • Briefly present your case
    • “just the facts” – avoid emotion
    • note the impacts; use a district example
    • use visuals and prepare supporting data/information
    • Leave time for legislator to speak
  • Leave one-page summary
  • Follow up with written “thank you”
    • re-state your position and provide follow-up information or answers to questions
Writing to Your Legislator(s)

• Tips:
  • Think about your timing
  • Stick to one subject
  • Be brief
  • Be positive; be polite
  • Ask for action – and a response
  • Think about letters from students
  • Avoid form letters
  • Say “thank you”
Phoning Your Legislator(s)

• Tips:
  • Ask for legislator or specific assistant (*know the players*)
  • Name, title, school district
  • Focus on one issue/bill
  • State your position—be prepared to provide rationale for position
  • Ask for your legislator’s position
E-mailing Your Legislator(s)

• Tips:
  • See tips for “writing to your legislator(s)”
    - AND -
  • Limit e-mail to very short messages or if timing is crucial
  • Provide your full postal address (address of voter registration)
Public Testimony

• Prior to testifying:
  • Prepare your remarks in writing if possible—provide to Committee staff
  • Be punctual to hearing
  • Use electronic sign-in (via web)
    • Sign in with full name and address
    • Note support or opposition to bill
  • Be mindful of amendments or substitutes to your bill
Public Testimony

• Making your remarks:
  • Introduce yourself; clearly indicate who you’re representing, if anyone
  • Be brief and be clear about your position
  • Avoid technical jargon, acronyms
  • Be prepared for questions—but don’t answer if you don’t know (“I’ll get back to you”—AND then follow through)
Additional Tips for Effective Advocacy

• Be prepared
• Be respectful of the office
• Don’t argue (although it’s OK to respectfully disagree)
• Don’t exaggerate
• Give examples
• Follow up
Additional Tips for Effective Advocacy

• Don’t assume legislators know more than they do
• Avoid education jargon and acronyms
• Don’t be informal
• Avoid information overload
• Make sure you have a specific “ask”
• Say “thank you”—for their time; for their consideration; for their support; or just for their service
Legislative Engagement

RELATIONSHIPS

are key element in effective advocacy!

It is incumbent upon YOU to establish ongoing, personal relationships with legislators
Legislative Advocacy is not a Spectator Sport—
It is a “Contact” Sport

Legislative Advocacy is also a Team Sport

While the Superintendent must take the lead,
Don’t be a Lone Ranger!
All administrators should be on your “Advocacy Team.” You should also consider involving principals, teachers, parents—and even students.

You are also encouraged to involve your school directors; as elected officials, they have a direct connection to the community—their perspective is unique and valuable.
Legislative Advocacy

Two additional important reminders:

• Advocacy is not a one-time thing, but a year-round effort
  • The best time to establish and build relationships is well-before the Legislative Session begins

• Effective advocacy does NOT have to be hard, time-consuming, or intimidating
  • You must commit to it, however
WHAT am I Advocating For?
WASA 2021 Legislative Platform

Short-term Issues to Address

• Hold the line on K-12 funding—don’t go backwards/honor Constitutional commitment
• Avoid “mid-year” reductions
• “No new mandates” (funded or not)
• Support technology/connectivity
• Increase local flexibility
• Clear sideboards on bargaining

Bottom Line Message: “Do No Harm”
WASA 2021 Legislative Platform

Long-term Issues

While K-12 is in “protection” mode, we must remind legislators K-12 has unmet needs.

When the economy rebounds, revenues will be available to invest and we must be prepared to quickly pivot.

Similar to 2020, we must temper expectations, but urgent we don’t allow our needs to be forgotten—or we will lose momentum and have to start conversations all over again.
Long-term Issues

Update Staffing Allocations

- Continues to be a core, fundamental piece of the education funding structure, but continues to contain, outdated unrealistic staffing levels

Provide Consistent/Equitable/Ample Education Resources

- Several components of K-12’s new funding structure have exacerbated inequities between districts

Support Capital Facilities

- While not technically Basic Education, facilities remain a core need and state continues to use outdated funding formulas that fail to recognize the true cost of building
Short-term Needs to Address:

• K-12 Budget
• Mid-year Reductions
• Mandates
• Flexibility
• Technology/Connectivity
• Bargaining

Long-term Needs to Address:

• Staffing Allocations
• Consistent, Equitable, and Ample Education Resources
• Capital Facilities

• 2021 priorities address immediate student needs

We believe each and every student needs:
• Stable Support
• Safety
• Access to Learning
• Well-Equipped Staff
Washington’s schools and districts continue to have urgent needs that require assistance to ensure all students have equitable access to continuous learning opportunities and programming. Acting on longer-term needs may have to be postponed, given the state’s current financial circumstances; however, they must stay at the forefront of policy-makers’ minds, as these issues must be addressed as the economy recovers. In addition to long-term issues, we urge the Legislature to immediately address several near-term issues, many of which are a direct result of the COVID-19 outbreak. We also urge the Legislature to refrain from adopting additional mandates during this crisis.

Stable Support
- Reimburse for unfunded costs associated with COVID-19, beyond what is reimbursed by federal funds, such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for students and staff, food service, transportation, and online learning
- Promptly pass through federal funding dedicated for schools without supplanting state funding
- Hold the line on K-12 funding and prevent mid-year budget reductions; any budget reductions deemed necessary must not create or further exacerbate funding inequities between districts and must be tied to an expenditure mandate that is also eliminated
- Maintain stable support for enrollment and pupil transportation

Safety
- Support funding for staffing and materials to ensure buildings and buses are clean and sanitary
- Train staff in providing trauma-informed instruction that is embedded in the social emotional framework

Access to Learning
- Provide equitable access to technology resources including devices and broadband connectivity
- Ensure resources for individualized needs of all students

Well-Equipped Staff
- Provide professional development for staff about racial literacy, cultural responsiveness, and stereotype threat for purposes of closing persistent opportunity gaps
- Provide professional development for staff so that they can effectively engage students in online learning

The School Funding Coalition represents the voices of nearly 8,000 school district leaders from our state’s 295 school districts. We bring a front-line understanding of school district financing and the education funding issues the Legislature continues to grapple with—especially as state budget decisions are contemplated in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic. For further information, please contact:

- AEA: Mitch Denning | medenning@comcast.net
- AESD: Melissa Gombosky | melissagombosky@gmail.com
- AWSP: Roz Thompson | roz@awsp.org
- WASA, WASBO, and WSPA: Dan Steele | dsteele@wasa-oly.org
- WSSDA: Marissa Rathbone | m.rathbone@wssda.org

August 2020
School Funding Coalition Priorities Talking Points

The School Funding Coalition is comprised of seven statewide education associations, representing almost 8,000 school district leaders. In preparation for the 2021 Legislative Session (as well as any potential Special Session called before January), the Coalition developed a short-list of priorities to support. While each association has their own Legislative Platform, the Coalition’s adopted priorities provide a set of issues in which we can come together and speak with one voice.

To assist your advocacy efforts, the Coalition has also created “talking points” for the priorities. The talking points below provide key message points for each priority, along with some additional information which provides further context behind the priorities.

We encourage you—individually and collectively—to use the priorities and talking points to guide your communications with legislators. While the Coalition supports each issue and we will strive to successfully advance each priority, we suggest that you focus on two or three specific issues to discuss as you communicate with your local legislators. Written messages should be short and concise, and in-person, phone or electronic (Zoom, Microsoft Teams, etc.) meetings should be narrowly focused. In follow-up messages or meetings, you can provide further support for the priorities discussed, or you can advocate for additional issues. Outlining all of the priorities at once, however, may overwhelm your policymakers—and there is a risk your message will be lost.

Use the talking points to better understand the priorities and to craft supportive arguments. We encourage you not to simply copy the talking points; use your own words and voice so your message is authentic. And add your own “stories” to illuminate the issues. For example, do not just ask for stable pupil transportation funding. Explain the consequences if you lack funding; describe the potential personnel impacts or what services you might have to eliminate. Make the words “real.”

School Funding Coalition Priorities: https://bit.ly/32sRilx
School Funding Coalition Priorities Talking Points: https://bit.ly/2Rm0guk
School Funding Coalition Overview Video: https://bit.ly/32Vw284
Daniel P. Steele
Assistant Executive Director, Government Relations
PO Box 14459
Tumwater, WA 98511
360.489.3642
dsteele@wasa-oly.org

Legislative Advocacy Brown Bag Webinar—Dec 2020