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THE WEEK AHEAD

YOUR TOP THREE WAYS TO ENGAGE IN THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS

WASA
WASHINGTON ASSOCIATION OF SCHOOL ADMINISTRATORS

WEEK 2—WEEKLY TOP THREE

January 20, 2026

- Email or Call Your Legislators re: SEBB Eligibility Expansion
- Sign in PRO for MSOC Funding
- Matters of Mental Health

- Bottom Line
- Quick Resources

Why This Week Matters

Week 2 of the legislative session marks a critical window as education proposals begin to advance. Early engagement by school leaders can meaningfully influence outcomes that have the potential to **improve, redirect, or slow** policies so they better support districts and public education across Washington.

1 | Email or Call Your Legislators re: SEBB Eligibility Expansion

What's happening:

WASA testified CON on [HB 2160](#) in House Appropriations last week and will do the same for [SB 5883](#) on Tuesday, January 20 in Senate Ways and Means. These are companion bills, which means they mirror one another and have sponsors from both the Senate and House of Representatives (which gives the policy more opportunities to be heard in committees and, therefore, socialized). These bills propose that benefits eligibility in the School Employees' Benefits Board program is presumed at the start of a school year if the school employee worked at least 630 hours in the prior school year and returns to the **same type** of position with **any employer**.

Why it matters:

There are several significant problems with the bill. First, it assumes districts will cover the cost; no funds will be appropriated to support its implementation. Next, it presumes districts will track potential employee hours from the prior year even if they worked for a different school district or a different employer entirely. Health care is an important part of employment, but districts simply cannot take on this additional unfunded cost.

Your action this week:

CONTACT members of [Senate Ways & Means](#) and/or [House Appropriations](#) from your district, **as soon as possible**. Washington Association of School Business Officials (WASBO) members received a call-to-action last week asking them to calculate projected costs; that information should be included in your communication with legislators. You may also pull talking points from [this WASA one-pager](#).

2 | Sign in PRO for MSOC Funding

What's happening:

On Wednesday, January 21 at 10:30 am, the [Senate Early Learning & K-12 Committee](#) will hear [SB 5918](#) on providing funding for school materials, supplies, and operating costs.

Why it matters:

This bill proposes an increase of \$100 per pupil or \$100,000 per district, whichever is greater, to help districts close

the current funding gap for MSOCs. The bill is sponsored by [Senator Lisa Wellman](#), who is moving it early in the session. To maintain momentum, the committee must pass the bill in executive session so it can advance to the **Senate Ways & Means Committee**.

Your action this week:

[Sign in PRO](#) to support the bill. Be sure to complete all requested fields and list your district name in the “organization” field.

Send a follow up message to [your legislators](#) to share how your district’s actual MSOC expenditures compare to current state allocations. You can find relevant [talking points](#) here and statewide and district-level data available [here](#) to help you craft your message.

3 | Matters of Mental Health

What’s happening:

School leaders know that student mental health is critical, and districts have already made significant investments in staffing and building behavioral health support systems, such as those in [Vancouver School District](#). Legislators are also hearing from constituents about student mental health needs, but they may not be hearing what districts are already doing to meet those needs. [HB 1634](#) is intended to create a consistent framework for districts to strengthen supports, but it assumes gaps that may not exist everywhere.

Why it matters:

When legislation requires districts to take on new work, especially where strong systems are in place, it raises concern that existing efforts are not fully understood. Rather than responding defensively, this is an opportunity to help legislators better understand the work happening in schools every day. Much of this work is invisible to policymakers, and it matters that they hear directly from those inside schools who are doing it.

Your action this week:

[SHARE](#) your success stories related to mental health and behavioral support systems with your legislators and members of the [House Education Committee](#). Student experiences, current planning systems, and staffing models are helpful examples. You likely do not need a new framework because this work is a priority and already underway in your district.

The bill is expected to pass out of committee on Thursday, January 22nd. Our request is to make the framework **optional** rather than required, recognizing existing systems and limited staff capacity without sufficient funding to support additional mandates.

Bottom Line

Speak up now. Week 2 is when policies take shape, and our silence means others shape them for us. The actions above are where your perspective can matter most.

Quick Resources

[WASA Bill Tracker](#)
[WASA legislative platform](#)
[Legislator contact list](#)



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