

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION SUMMARY

RECENTLY PASSED BILLS IMPACTING K–12 EDUCATION

[HB 1170](#) Artificial intelligence content notifications

Requires providers of certain generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems to label content so that users and consumers know that content was made by AI. Requires government agencies using AI tools to interact with the public to inform those consumers that they are interacting with AI.

[HB 1295](#) Reading and writing literacy

Requires any new or updated reading and writing curriculum for kindergarten through 4th grade to meet certain requirements beginning in 2027, directs school districts on how to use the materials, updates standards for teacher endorsements related to literacy and requires Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction to create a training program for educators.

[HB 1634](#) Comprehensive behavioral health supports for students

Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) and Educational Service Districts (ESDs) to develop a technical assistance and training framework to help school districts and public schools support student behavioral health. Once developed, OSPI and ESDs must use the framework to better coordinate and deliver behavioral health support and technical assistance to districts and schools.

[HB 1795](#) Addressing restraint or isolation of students

Prohibits mechanical restraint, chemical restraint, and physical restraint or physical escort of a student that is life threatening. Specifies that isolation may not be used as a planned behavioral intervention in individualized education programs (IEPs) or 504 plans and allows restraint only under specified circumstances. Prohibits the construction, repurposing, or establishment of any new room or other enclosed area for the primary purpose of student isolation. Specifies that student restraint and isolation requirements apply for all providers of public educational services, except for licensed or certified health professionals of an inpatient health care facility.

[HB 1796](#) School construction debt

Authorizes school districts to incur debt and issue bonds without voter approval, within the existing 0.375% indebtedness limit, to construct school buildings and purchase necessary furniture, equipment, and instructional apparatus. Limits this authority to districts that have passed a capital levy and have not been placed on binding conditions within the previous three years.

HB 1960 Renewable energy

Exempts new renewable energy equipment from property taxes that would normally contribute to local tax bases supporting school districts. The bill replaces that revenue with a renewable energy excise tax distributed to districts based on existing levy shares. While districts still receive funding from projects, the shift from property value to fixed capacity-based taxation may reduce long-term revenue growth compared with traditional property taxes. As a result, districts hosting large renewable projects could receive less revenue over time than under the current property-tax system.

HB 2225 Regulating artificial intelligence companion chatbots

Requires companion chatbot services to clearly notify users that they are interacting with artificial intelligence and not a human, establishes specific requirements and safeguards for users who are minors, and requires chatbot operators to have procedures to prevent and respond to user expressions of self-harm. Does not apply to narrowly tailored educational tools used in school or instructional settings that are designed solely to support specific, curriculum-aligned learning objectives and do not provide open-ended conversational companionship.

HB 2242 Preventive health services

Authorizes Department of Health to issue immunization recommendations and guidance, requires health insurance plans to cover immunizations recommended by the Department, instead of those recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Department, rather than ACIP, will determine which immunizations count as “vaccines” for the purposes of the Washington Vaccine Association.

HB 2317 Early learning licensing

Provides that Early Childhood Education and Assistance Program (ECEAP) or Head Start program operated during the school day and located in a public school or a community/technical college, does not need to meet the standard licensing requirements of the Department of Children, Youth, and Families (DCYF).

HB 2360 Albuterol access in schools

Authorizes public and private schools to maintain and administer school-supplied albuterol in accordance with specified requirements. Requires schools to follow specified steps when administering albuterol and inform parents after the student receives albuterol. School staff can choose not to participate in giving albuterol. Staff and schools are protected from certain legal claims when following the rules.

HB 2429 Youth behavioral health

Requires the Governor to maintain a dedicated officer (if nonstate funding is available) to monitor the implementation of the children and youth behavioral health strategic plan and establish a council to address health and wellness issues for children and youth and

coordinate strategic plan implementation. Entities involved in children and youth behavioral health must align their activities with the strategic plan and ensure equitable implementation. The Children and Youth Behavioral Health Work Group is extended two more years, now expiring December 30, 2031.

HB 2475 Language access

Requires the Office of Equity to create consistent guidelines to ensure state programs, activities, and services are accessible in multiple languages and meet participants' needs and work with relevant groups to propose solutions to the statewide shortage of qualified spoken and sign language interpreters and translators by December 1, 2027. By June 30, 2028, state agencies must report how they will implement the guidelines, including timelines and any additional resources.

HB 2534 Military families education stability

Makes changes to school district requirements for enrolling children of military families, transferring their education records, and providing them with services and accommodations. Extends certain deadlines for providing proof of residency.

HB 2557 Special education evaluation reports

Requires school districts to provide parents and guardians with a copy of the special education evaluation report no later than 35 school days after receiving consent to evaluate, unless an exception applies or the parent signs a waiver. The special education eligibility determination meeting must be held no sooner than 5 school days after providing the report and no later than 40 school days after consent. Office of Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) must update rules, model forms, and technical guidance to reflect these timelines and requirements.

HB 2594 Unhoused children access to free and appropriate public education

Codifies provisions and requirements in state law that align with the federal McKinney-Vento Homeless Assistance Act that are ensuring that homeless children and youths have equal access to the same free, appropriate public education and provides that the actions of the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction, school districts, charter schools, and state-tribal education compact schools that meet requirements of the federal act also satisfy equivalent requirements established in state law.

HB 2632 Noncitizen terminology

Replaces certain references to the term "alien" with the term "noncitizen, requires all state and local statutes and other official documents enacted after July 1, 2026, to use the term "noncitizen" or other context appropriate term, instead of the term "alien," when referring to an individual who is not a citizen or national of the United States, unless use of the term "alien" is required to comply with federal law or funding requirements and allows state agencies to use the expedited rulemaking process in certain instances.

SB 5272 School safety penalties

Expands protections for school staff, students, and athletic officials. Allows schools to remove students who commit violent interference, and bars convicted non-students from school property or related events for up to 18 months.

SB 5346 Student mobile device use

Updates the definition of digital citizenship to include responsible cell phone use. Requires OSPI to post research and guidance to help schools teach students responsible cell phone and mobile device use. School district boards of directors may adopt policies and procedures that limit the possession and use of mobile devices by students. Requires OSPI to submit a report to the legislature by December 15, 2027.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$72K

SB 5841 Financial aid applications

Integrates financial aid tracking into the High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP). Requires that the HSBP be able to notify college bound students about eligibility, Adds the Washington Opportunity Scholarship to required information and requires schools to review financial aid eligibility, as practical with students starting in School Year 2027–28.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$84K

SB 5922 Transportation vehicle fund transfers

Allows school districts to repurpose funds from reduced student transportation vehicles under certain conditions. If a district reduces its fleet by not replacing vehicles, it can petition OSPI to transfer funds from its transportation vehicle fund to another fund for alternative uses. OSPI must approve the transfer if the reduction in vehicles is justified due to forecasted declines in student enrollment or other relevant factors affecting the district's transportation program.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$6K

SB 5957 Homeless youth committee

Expands membership on the Office of Homeless Youth Prevention and Protection Programs Advisory Committee to increase representation from lived experience and diverse populations.

SB 5963 Passport to careers program

Aligns eligibility and financial need definitions for the Washington College Grant (WCG) and the Promise Tuition Credit (PTC). Starting in the 2026–27 academic year, anyone eligible for the PTC automatically qualifies as income-eligible for the WCG.

SB 5969 Individualized Education Program (IEP) transition plans

Requires the statewide online system for Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) to be able to integrate a student's IEP transition plan with the universal online High School and Beyond Plan (HSBP) platform as fully as possible. Likewise, HSBP of students with IEPs must be integrated with the statewide IEP system to the greatest extent possible.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$164K

SB 5994 Timber tax distributions

Extends timber tax distributions to school districts without qualifying levies in a given calendar year, if they had qualifying levies in effect in either of the previous two calendar years. The highest levy rate in effect during the two previous calendar years must be used to calculate timber tax distributions

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$29K

SB 6260 Public education funding

Requires the Office of the Superintendent of Public Instruction (OSPI) to update school bus depreciation schedules to 10 years for Category A buses and 15 years for Category C and D buses, while temporarily adjusting reimbursement calculations for zero-emission school buses, Changes Running Start funding limits, reducing the maximum funded enrollment to 1.3 (currently 1.4) until the 2028-29 school year. Directs OSPI to implement a reduction in Transition to Kindergarten (TTK) funding by first prioritizing existing programs that serve specific student populations. Adjusts Local Effort Assistance (LEA) calculations by lowering the threshold for districts with high alternative learning experience (ALE) enrollment and freezes inflationary increases to National Board Certification bonuses after the 2025–26 school year.

SB 6268 Special education complaint record

Requires OSPI to maintain an online record of all final decisions issued in response to special education community complaints. Each final decision must be available in an online format and accessible to the public at no charge for 20 years after the complaint is finalized.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$16K

SB 6278 Teacher & principal programs

Requires additional elements in the ongoing reviewed conducted by the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) of fully approved teacher and principal preparation programs. These include, standards, educator role standards, evidence submitted by the programs, and input from community members, early learning partners, and K–12 partners such as teachers and district

administrators. PESB must also periodically update the review framework to reflect the evolving needs of classrooms, and beginning January 1, 2027, educator preparation programs must submit student teacher field-placement plans to PESB at least once every three years according to a schedule set by the board.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$6K

2025–27 OPERATING BUDGET (SB 5998) – NEW PROVISOS

Isolation & Restraint, Title II Funds – Sec. 501(1)(p)

Redirects and permits the use of existing federal Title II funds for demonstration projects showcasing the processes and outcomes of building school-wide systems to support students in distress and prevent crisis escalation cycles that may result in restraint or isolation.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$2M (redirects and permits use of existing federal title II dollars).

PreK-K12 Dashboard – Sec. 501(2)(d)

Requires OSPIDCYF to determine best practices, shared strategies, and data sharing approaches for the joint development of regional, public facing data dashboards that support the transition from early learning to the K–12 education system. Requires the joint dashboards to be completed by June 30, 2026.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$0

Truancy Funding – Sec. 501(4)(a)(xiii)

Restores funding for school districts to support youth who are truant or at risk of becoming truant, and for costs associated with filing or serving petitions under RCW 28A.225.030.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$1.399M

Bus Depreciation Extension – Sec. 507(7)

Reduces funding for school bus depreciation schedules in line with Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6260 (Public education funding).

*Funding Reduction in 2025-27 Biennium: **-\$21.1M***

Universal Meals – Sec. 508(6)

Commits sufficient dollars from Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6346 (Tax on millionaires) to fund access to breakfast and lunch for all children served without charge in schools in the 2027–29 Biennium.

National Board Bonus Inflation Factor Cut – Sec. 513(2)(a)

Removes the planned inflation factor for the National Board bonuses in line with Engrossed Substitute Senate Bill No. 6260 (Public education funding).

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$0

Principal Leadership Academy Reduction – Sec. 513(2)(d)

Reduced funding for a leadership academy for school principals and administrators.

Funding Reduction in 2025–27 Biennium: ~~-\$405K~~

Beginning Educator Support Program (BEST) Reduction – Sec. 513(2)(e)

Reduces funding for a Beginning Educator Support Program (BEST). Restricts funding for the 2026–27 school year to support only first year educators.

Funding Reduction in 2025–27 Biennium: ~~-\$2.3M~~

Transition to Kindergarten (TK) Reduction – Sec. 520

Reduces funding to support enrollment in the transition to kindergarten program.

Funding Reduction in 2025–27 Biennium: ~~-\$27.3M~~

Continues of funding for Dual and Tribal language education grants – Sec. 521(1)

Funds dual and tribal language education grants

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$1.25M

Continuation of funding for supports for students experiencing homelessness – Sec. 521(3)

Funds support for students living with homelessness.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$1.2M

Continuation of funding for 9th Grade Success – Sec. 521(7)

Funds ninth grade success grants.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$1.5M

Restores funding for Foster Youth Education Outcomes – Sec. 521(9)

Funds demonstration sites to improve the educational outcomes of students living in foster care.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$3.5M

Funding for Dual Credit Exam Fees for low-income students – Sec. 521(10)

Funds to subsidize dual credit exam fees for low-income students.

New K–12 Funding in 2025–27 Biennium: \$2M

2026 SUPPLEMENTAL CAPITAL BUDGET (SB 6003) – New Provisos

Sec. 5001

Healthy Kids / Healthy Schools grants for lead in school drinking water remediation.

New K–12 Funding: \$ 2.5 M

Sec. 5002

Small District Modernization Grant Program. Provides fully funded capital grants for school building repairs and modernizations to school districts with enrollments of one thousand students or less.

New K–12 Funding: \$71.11 M

Sec. 5003

School Construction Assistance Program (SCAP) provides funding assistance to school districts that are undertaking a major new construction or modernization project. Projects must meet eligibility requirements.

New K–12 Funding: \$21.21 M

Sec. 5004

School Seismic Safety Grant Program provides grants to school districts and state-tribal education compact (STEC) schools to cover the costs of retrofitting or relocating schools located in high seismic areas or tsunami zones. The budget funds project design for North Beach Junior/Senior high and Hoquiam Elementary School.

New K–12 Funding: \$13.90 M

Sec. 5006

School Construction Assistance Program Enhancement Pilot Project. Requires local funding. Funds provided to Garfield, Wellpinit, and Wahkiakum School Districts pending a local share.

New K–12 Funding: \$3.79 M

Sec. 5007

Distressed Schools. Grants to school districts as determined by the Legislature. Projects include Whitworth Orca K-8 roof replacement, Finley School District HVAC replacement, and repairs to the Eatonville High School retaining wall.

New K–12 Funding: \$ 5.41 M