

2026 LEGISLATIVE SESSION

SUMMARY OF NEW DISTRICT REQUIREMENTS

This document includes a summary of recent legislation that has direct impacts on school districts. For a complete summary of 2026 K–12 legislative changes, including new budget items and funding changes, see the [2026 End of Session Summary](#).

New Requirements for the 2026–27 School Year

HB 1795 Addressing restraint or isolation of students (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, staff members of any school district or other provider of public educational services are prohibited from using any of the following restraints on any student: Mechanical restraint; chemical restraint; or physical restraint or physical escort that is life threatening, restricts breathing, or restricts blood flow to the brain, including prone, supine, and wall restraints. Isolation may not be used as a planned behavioral intervention in individualized education programs or 504 plans and allows restraint only under specified circumstances. Construction, repurposing, or otherwise establishing any new room or other enclosed area for the primary purpose of student isolation is prohibited.

HB 1796 School construction debt (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, a school district may borrow money for school construction, modernization, or remodeling without a vote of the people as long as it: has voter approval for a capital levy for school facilities, has not been on binding conditions in the last three years and agrees to wait two years before receiving state school construction assistance under RCW 28A. 525.162.

HB 2105 Immigrant workers (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, employers are required to notify employees within five business days if the employer receives a federal Notice of Inspection of Employment Eligibility Verification Forms I-9 and inform affected workers within five business days after receiving the results of the I-9 inspection. Authorizes the state attorney general to bring civil enforcement actions against employers.



HB 2534 Military families education stability (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, school districts requirements for enrolling children of military families, transferring their education records, and providing them with services and accommodations are updated to include acceptance of the conditional application for enrollment and course registration by a school district from a child of a military family prior to the child arriving in Washington or a bordering state, transportation, proof of directed move, proof of residence and finalization of enrollment specifications.

HB 2557 Special education evaluation reports (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, school districts are required 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 2632 Noncitizen terminology

Beginning July 1, 2026 all state and local statutes and other official documents must use the term "noncitizen" or other context appropriate 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.

SB 5272 School safety penalties (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, if a public school student interferes by force or violence, or by threat of force or violence during extracurricular athletic activities, the student may be excluded from participating in or attending that activity. Upon conviction of Interference by Force or Violence, any person, other than a student, must be excluded from entering the school where the crime was committed or from attending the extracurricular athletic activities in which the crime was committed for a period of no less than 12 months and no more than 18 months.

SB 5346 Student mobile device use (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, school district boards of directors may adopt policies and procedures that limit the possession and use of mobile devices by students. When considering the adoption of policies and procedures, school district boards of directors are encouraged to review recommendations provided by OSPI.

SB 5922 Transportation vehicle fund transfers (2026)

Beginning July 1, 2026, if a school district chooses to reduce its overall fleet of student transportation vehicles by forgoing vehicle replacement it may petition OSPI for permission to transfer money from its transportation vehicle fund to another fund for alternative use. The money that may be transferred includes depreciation payments and earned interest from a fully depreciated vehicle

SB 5009 Accommodating Multiple Vehicle Types for Transporting Students (2025)

By September 1, 2026, OSPI must develop rules for drivers transporting students in Washington State Patrol-inspected school vehicles other than school buses. A driver that exclusively transports students in such a vehicle must have the appropriate driver's license for that vehicle and may not be required to hold a commercial driver's license.

For more information about OSPI rulemaking, see [OSPI Rulemaking Activity](#) (WA register [26-05-043](#))

SB 5963 Passport to careers program (2026)

Beginning in the 2026–27 academic year, anyone eligible for the PTC automatically qualifies as income-eligible for the WCG. Eligibility and financial need definitions for the Washington College Grant (WCG) and the Promise Tuition Credit (PTC) will be aligned.

HB 2360 Albuterol access in schools (2026)

By January 1, 2027, school nurses and designated trained school personnel shall access and administer the school or school district supply of albuterol for the management of a student's respiratory symptoms, including breathing difficulties caused by conditions such as asthma. OSPI and the Department of Health (DOH) shall update a uniform policy to include a uniform procedure for the personnel to use. School districts may adopt policies regarding the use of albuterol from a school or school district supply authorized. However, if a school district chooses to adopt a policy, it must include the uniform procedure developed by OSPI and DOH.

HB 1170 Artificial intelligence content notifications (2026)

Beginning February 1, 2027, providers of certain generative artificial intelligence (AI) systems must label content so people know it was made by Artificial Intelligence (AI), and government agencies are to inform consumers if they use AI systems that interact directly with consumers.

New Requirements for the 2027–28 School Year

HB 1295 Reading and writing literacy (2026)

Beginning September 1, 2027, when a school district updates or purchases a curriculum related to early literacy, reading literacy, or writing literacy for use with any students in kindergarten through grade four, the new or updated curriculum must include at least the following essential components: (i) Language comprehension, including semantics, syntax, and knowledge building; (ii) reading and writing fluency; (iii) orthographic knowledge, including phonics and spelling; (iv) phonological awareness, including phonemic awareness; (v) vocabulary; and (vi) oral language development and proficiency.

The new or updated curriculum must also be:

- (i) Diagnostic of and responsive to individual student needs, including by being multisensory, multimodal, high quality, and culturally relevant;
- (ii) Evidence-aligned to established interdisciplinary literacy research and evidence-informed in its instructional design;
- (iii) Aligned with the state learning standard in English language arts, as the standard is adopted and periodically revised under RCW 28A.655.070; and
- (iv) Consistent with the teacher endorsement standards for literacy-related competencies adopted by the Washington Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB)

To the extent possible without incurring undue financial or operational burden, school districts must implement curriculum purchased or updated consistent with the curriculum developer's guidance and school district policies, with the expectation of achieving full fidelity and sustainability over time.

HB 2360 Albuterol access in schools (2026)

Beginning in the 2027–28 school year, school districts and private schools are authorized to maintain a supply of albuterol at each school in a designated location. It may be acquired from donation sources, but it must be accompanied by a prescription.

SB 5025 Concerning Educational Interpreters (2025)

By the beginning of the 2027–28 school year, educational interpreters must have obtained a full or limited certificate. Educational interpreters who have not obtained a limited certificate but who demonstrate satisfactory efforts to achieve a full certificate may continue providing educational interpreter services up to eighteen months after taking the performance assessment or twelve months after receiving their performance assessment results. Professional Educator Standards Board (PESB) is responsible for adopting rules related to educational interpreter assessments, identifying both full and limited performance standards, establishing certificates for educational interpreters according to those performance standards, and making annual data relating to educational interpreters publicly available.

SB 5841 Financial aid applications (2026)

Beginning with the 2027-28 school year, financial aid information provided to the student in their high school and beyond plan must be reviewed by the student and appropriate staff, to the extent practicable, after the student has indicated completing a postsecondary financial aid application to determine eligibility for financial aid opportunities. The high school and beyond plan must identify whether a student is enrolled in the College Bound Scholarship Program, include evidence that the student has received information about completing financial aid applications, and identify whether the student has completed state or federal financial aid applications.

SB 5807 Concerning Wellness Incentives for Public and School Employee Health Benefit Plans (2025)

Beginning January 1, 2028, the SmartHealth Program offered by Public Employees Benefit Board (PEBB) and School Employees' Benefits Board (SEBB) is eliminated.

Beginning January 1, 2028, employees are no longer eligible to earn a wellness incentive. Employees who have met the eligibility requirements to receive a wellness incentive by December 31, 2027, will still receive the wellness incentive during the 2028 calendar year.