

# Legislative Updates

It is time to break out your powdered wigs and fill up those ink wells because the legislative session is *NIGH!* This year is a short legislative session (60 days) that will produce a supplemental budget for Washington state along with numerous new laws. As a reminder, the supplemental budget is simply a revised version of the biennial budget passed the year before. Supplemental budgets can add to, reduce, or reallocate state spending for the current and upcoming fiscal year.



The likely start date for this year's session will be January 8<sup>th</sup>, 2024. Between now and then there will be a flurry of bill introductions and decisions made about when bills will be scheduled in committees or if they get scheduled at all. The Governor's Office will also release their proposed Supplemental Budget to signal to the Legislature the Governor's priorities.

## OSPI Bill Proposals

This year OSPI has four bill proposals that would directly impact special education services in Washington. See the links below for more information on the proposals.

- [Advancing a Living Wage for Washington's Paraeducators](#)
  - OSPI proposes providing school districts with an additional allocation equal to \$7 per hour plus benefits for all paraeducators hired in the 2022–23 school year, adjusted for inflation and the same regionalization adjustments provided for school districts under RCW 28A.150.412.
- [Funding Equitable, High-Quality Services for All Students with Disabilities](#)
  - Remove the 15% cap on special education funding and allow school districts to generate full state funding for the services they are legally obligated to provide to all students receiving special education services.
  - Fully fund the Inclusionary Practices Project (IPP) to continue the work of this proven professional development and technical assistance network that is quickly moving our state forward in both inclusion and preventing overidentification of students with disabilities.
  - Fund the legislatively required monitoring of authorized entities (formerly nonpublic agencies), which will ensure OSPI can fully comply with legislative requirements related to on-site inspections.
  - Fund a feasibility study for OSPI to explore a statewide IEP system that would provide a consistent, integrated system to benefit students with disabilities, their families, educators, and schools.



- **Overcoming Barriers to Student Success Through Integrated Supports**
  - Create a robust, statewide, and centralized early warning system to identify students unable to engage in academic learning through a chronic physical absence from the classroom.
  - Investment in strategies to locate chronically absent students and connect them with the necessary supports to reengage in academic learning.
  - A specific focus on 9th grade success (i.e., passing core classes in the 9th grade), which is particularly indicative of a student’s likelihood to graduate high school, more so than race, ethnicity, economic status, or test scores.
  - Barrier reduction resources for students ages 16–21 who are severely credit-deficient and unable to graduate with their four-year cohort.
  
- **Recruiting and Retaining Special Education Teachers Through Effective Teacher Residencies**
  - OSPI proposes funding three cohorts of special education teacher residents who will complete a year-long program that combines professional training and coursework with in-the-classroom co-teaching experience alongside a mentor teacher.
  - Through six strategic investments, Washington can support the over 15,000 substitute teachers working in schools. These investments include Relational Conversations, Online and In-Person Professional Development, SubCommunities, Career Coaching, and SubPosium.
  - Invest in a more robust and comprehensive data collection to provide data-driven workforce investments focused on the area of highest need in Washington state based on current data available: special education teachers.
  
- **All OSPI Legislative Budget Requests can be found [HERE](#).**

As it presently stands, these are all just proposals and cannot be introduced as bills until OSPI finds a Senator or Representative to sign on as a sponsor.

If you have questions about special education policy and the legislature, please contact me at [David.Green@k12.wa.us](mailto:David.Green@k12.wa.us).