



LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

AFT-West Virginia, AFL-CIO



Standing 55 Strong...From Statehouse to Schoolhouse

March 11, 2019

Regular session ends, special session on education called

While the 2019 Regular Session of the WV Legislature ended on Saturday, it feels more like a hiatus than a conclusion to education employees. The Senate leadership never took up HB 2730, the Governor's "clean" 5 % pay raise bill, despite Senate President Carmichael being on record to "guarantee" its passage in October 2018. The announcement of a special session by Governor Jim Justice brings mixed feelings of appreciation for the Governor's determination in providing the promised raises coupled with skepticism at the probable resurfacing of defunding schemes like charter schools and ESAs. While the pay increase is much needed, the legislative leadership should be reminded that education employees did not strike over a pay raise and we will approach the special session with a suspicious eye.

Our union and our members welcome the opportunity to offer their expertise on ways to improve student achievement like lower class sizes and increased mental health and counseling services for students. AFT-WV encourages education employees to attend the public forums on education and share your valuable ideas about what students need to improve achievement.



AFT members and friends watched the floor sessions until the bell rang at midnight on Saturday, closing out the 2019 Regular Legislative Session.

Bills passed relating to PEIA Funding

HB 2665

HB 2665 appropriates the \$105 million of the funding promised by Gov. Justice into the PEIA Rainy Day Fund to shore up the Public Employees Insurance Agency. This funding stabilizes costs and premiums (may be used to reduce or prevent benefit cuts and/or reduce premium increases) through plan year 2021.

HB 3139

HB 3139 creates the PEIA Rainy Day Fund and fee. The fund was created in order to place and use the \$105 million appropriated by HB 2665.



Other education-related bills that completed legislative action

SB 1 Offers tuition grants for WV residents to obtain degrees through WV Community and Technical Colleges.

SB 26 Permitting certain employees of educational service cooperatives participate in state's teacher retirement systems

SB 154 Using school facilities for funeral and memorial services for certain community members

SB 267 Requiring State Board of Education adopt policy detailing level of computer science instruction

SB 238 Increasing certain penalties for passing stopped school bus. Passed Senate; pending House Judiciary

SB 329 Relating to agricultural education in high schools.

SB 441 Relating to higher education campus police officers

SB 605 Permitting Secondary Schools Athletic Commission discipline schools for not following protocol for concussions and head injuries

SB 624 Allowing county boards of education use alternative assessment provided in Every Student Succeeds Act

SB 632 Improving student safety

SB 636 Authorizing legislative rules for Higher Education Policy Commission

SB 670 Relating to WV College Prepaid Tuition and Savings Program

SB 673 Relating to public higher education accountability and planning

HB 2004 Providing for a program of instruction in workforce preparedness

HB 2009 Creating a new category of Innovation in Education grant program

HB 2363 Relating to the Upper Kanawha Valley Resiliency and Revitalization Program

HB 2422 Relating to the time for the observation of "Celebrate Freedom Week"

HB 2378 Relating generally to grounds for revocation of a teaching certificate

HB 2541 Requiring certain safety measures be taken at public schools.

HB 2662 Relating to certificates or employment of school personnel

HB 2674 Creating a student loan repayment program for a mental health provider

HB 2853 Establishes the WV Program for Open Education Resources, which would put any teaching resources/materials that are in open domain to a centralized location

HB 3020 Relating to sole source contracts for goods and services with nonprofit corporations affiliated with the respective education institutions

HB 3095 Establishing a minimum monthly retirement annuity for certain retirees