

AFT-WV LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



FROM STATEHOUSE TO SCHOOLHOUSE

JANUARY 21, 2022

2022 Session: And we're off!

The 2022 Legislative Session is already off to an unusual start, with the cancellation of the Governor's State of the State address on day 1 to the absence of many lawmakers due to Covid outbreaks and snowstorms. After the chaotic start of the first week, the second week was filled with committee meetings and the opportunity to speak to our issues and concerns with supportive legislators during the weekly labor caucus meetings held in both chambers.

Bills Advanced From Committee:

[House Joint Resolution 102](#) subjects the policy-making and rule-making authority of the State Board of Education to legislative review, approval, amendment, or rejection. If passed, this bill would require a referendum vote by the general public, because it removes the constitutional authority from the state Board of Education. The resolution passed the House Education Committee and moves to House Judiciary for discussion and consideration.

[HB 4071](#) makes masks and quarantines optional in public schools, despite any policies enacted by local school boards. The bill removes the local control of education or public health officials from the decision making process. The bill passed the House Education Committee and moves to House Judiciary for consideration.

[SB 261](#) updates previous legislation which requires video cameras in certain special education classrooms. The bill calls for more frequent viewing of the video footage in special education classrooms in order to detect abuse sooner or prevent it. The bill was amended and passed Senate Education. It now moves to the Senate floor.

[SB 60](#) allows the BOE to create and provide courses in family and consumer sciences in secondary schools. The bill has passed Senate Education, and now is on 3rd reading on Senate floor.

[SB 229](#) requires an impact statement in certain instances of school closing or consolidation. SB 229 has advanced from Senate Education and is on 3rd reading on Senate floor.

[Committee Sub for HB 4058](#) requires all school bathrooms have individual stalls for privacy by June 30, 2023. This cost would be borne by the local school board and carries a \$28 million price tag. The bill now moves to House Finance for consideration.

[Committee Sub for HB 4074](#) requires schools provide eating disorder and self-harm training for teachers and students. The bill has passed House Education and is on second reading on the special calendar.



Pay Raise Bills

Governor Justice proposed a 5% across the board pay increase for all public employees, teachers and service personnel in his state of the state address, but a corresponding bill has not been introduced at press time.

[SB 18](#) is a separate pay bill, sponsored by Senators Romano, Jeffries, Lindsay, Caputo, Geffert, and Woelfel. The bill proposes a pay increase for all public school teachers of \$2,700 per year for the next three school years. The bill has been introduced and awaits consideration by the Senate Education Committee.

Other Bills of Interest

The following bills have been introduced but not considered by a committee at press time:

[SB 195](#) expands early childhood education programs to three-year-old children.

[HB 2362](#) calls for implementing trauma-informed practices in schools.

[HB 3006](#) provides for the hiring of homeless education coordinators in counties designated by the State Board of Education to assist and support students living in vulnerable situations.

[HB 2143](#) declares a shortage of qualified bus operators and allows retired bus operators to accept employment.

[HB 4104](#) provides a 5% cost of living increase for state retirees who make under \$60,000 per year.

[HB 2039](#) expunges records of unsubstantiated complaints made by the Department of Health and Human Resources against teachers after three years.



Bills of Concern

[HB 3017](#) removes standardized testing and portfolio requirements for homeschooled students. The bill does not replace the requirements with any other accountability measurements.

[HB 4310](#) changes the spousal coverage for health insurance through PEIA. We believe the intent of this bill is to require employees to pay the full share of PEIA for their spouse's coverage, if their spouse has health insurance coverage available through their employer and chooses PEIA coverage instead. AFT-WV is reaching out to PEIA officials for clarification on this bill.

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- Make sure your cell phone number is updated with us! During the 2019 strike, AFT-WV deployed a new technology that enables us to instantly have a text conversation with all members with a valid mobile number on file. If you haven't recently updated your contact information, please email or call the office with your new number.
- Many AFT local presidents and staff representatives use the Remind app to communicate with their local members. Ask your local president or staff rep if your county uses Remind and get signed up!