

# AFT-WV LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

FIGHTING FOR PUBLIC EDUCATION



FROM STATEHOUSE TO SCHOOLHOUSE

JANUARY 28, 2022

## Gov. Justice reiterates call for 5% raise in State of State address

While Governor Justice had already publicly expressed his support for a 5% pay raise for school and state employees, he reiterated those priorities on Thursday in his Covid-delayed State of the State address.

Other educational priorities announced included increasing penalties for teachers who abuse students, fully covering the cost of college credit classes for high school students, and making computer programming and coding classes mandatory for middle and high school students.

## Bills Passed from a Chamber:

[Committee Sub for HB 4074](#) requires schools provide eating disorder and self-harm training for teachers and students. The bill has passed the House and has been communicated to the Senate.

[SB 246](#) requires water bottle filling stations in any school being built or under major improvements. This bill passed the Senate and now moves to the House for consideration.

[SB 60](#) allows the BOE to create and provide courses in family and consumer sciences in secondary schools. The bill has passed the Senate, and now moves to the House for consideration by the Education Committee.

[Committee Substitute for SB 229](#) requires an impact statement in certain instances of school closing or consolidation. SB 229 has passed the Senate and awaits action by the House Education Committee.

## Bills Advanced From Committee:

[Committee Substitute for SB 227](#) requires county boards of education and county superintendents to comply with instructions of State Board of Education. After much debate, this bill passed Senate Education in an 8-5 vote and advances to first reading on the Senate Floor.

[SB 267](#) relates to transportation of students in county board owned and insured vehicles. This also allows for parents, guardians, or other adults to transport students (less than 16) in private vehicles. The bill passed the committee and will advance to the Senate floor.

[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, but then was recalled for technical clean up. A committee substitute was passed and the bill will be on 3rd reading (passage) on Monday.

[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.

## 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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