

Final Legislative Update

The legislative session has drawn to a close with little to celebrate for education employees and WV workers.

A plan to fix and fund PEIA was not developed and the state budget was not balanced. A special legislative session has been called by the Governor in order to balance the budget and we are hopeful that a fix to PEIA will be granted during the special session. Overall, the legislative session was full of setbacks for education employees and WV workers, but a few education bills passed that were positive for school service personnel. Committee Substitute for **SB 146** – Establishing instruction standards for early childhood education passed both chambers and was signed by the Governor. The bill will go into effect on July 1, 2016, and will allow a four-day, rather than require a five-day instruction week.

Many bills related to service personnel never made it to committee. We were unhappy about the salary and benefit increase bills not moving, but grateful that **HB 4011** - Providing for the authorization and oversight of public charter schools never made it to a committee vote.

We kept a close watch on **House Bill 4465** – Relating to salary equity. The bill was on-the-move near the end of the session, but thankfully was held up by being placed on the House Calendar that was not moving. Passage of the bill would have eliminated the salary equity formula designed to keep the highest paid and lowest paid counties within a 10% variance. The bill would have taken \$41 a month out of the pockets of service personnel in the lowest paid counties in the state

We will remember in November, and we hope that our members will too. Stay tuned for the WVSSPA Political Action Committee's candidate endorsements. See below the final update of service personnel-related bills.

Bills Passed WVSSPA Supports - *Click underlined bill number for full version*

Com. Sub. SB 13 – Increasing penalties for overtaking and passing stopped school buses. *Awaiting Governor's signature.*

Com Sub. SB 146 – Establishing instruction standards for early childhood education. This bill would allow a four-day, rather than require a five-day instruction week. *Completed legislation, effective July 1, 2016.*

Com Sub. HB 4171 – Providing that school instructional terms for students begin no earlier than the day after Labor Day and end no later than the second Friday in June. *Awaiting Governor's signature.*

Com. Sub. HB 4295 – Relating to the School Innovation Zones Act. The purpose of this bill is to create Innovation in Education designated schools, which demonstrate innovation in STEM, community school partnership, entrepreneurship or career pathways. *Awaiting Governor's signature.*

Bills Passed WVSSPA Opposes - *Click underlined bill number for full version*

Com. Sub. HB 4566 – Relating to school personnel. This bill will limit transfers after the 20th day prior to the beginning of instructional term. *Awaiting Governor's signature.*

SB 1 – Establishing Workplace Freedom Act/Right to Work bill. *Legislation Passed.*

The Right to Work bill will allow non-union employees who do not pay union dues to be eligible for the same rights and benefits provided to dues-paying union members including legal representation.

WVSSPA Supported Bills that Died

SB 313 – Changing mandatory school instructional time from 180 days to minutes.

Com. Sub. SB 373 – Granting full control of the state's eight Regional Education Service Agencies (RESAs) to the state superintendent of schools.

Com. Sub. SB 420 – Tobacco tax increase. Passage of this bill would appropriate monies gained from the tax increase to fund PEIA.

Other Noteworthy Bills Passed

SB 369 – Reducing legislative education reporting requirements

SB 476 – Relating to driving restrictions in school zones

HB 4005 – repealing prevailing rate of wages requirements

HB 4151 – Making a supplementary appropriation to the Department of Education

HB 4301 – Relating to a framework for initiating comprehensive transformation of school leadership

HB 4461 – Relating to School Building Authority Major Improvement Fund eligibility

WVSSPA Opposed Bills that never made it out of Committee

HB 4011 – Providing for the authorization and oversight of public charter schools.

The bill would have allowed for the authorization and oversight of new start-up public charter schools, conversions of existing schools or conversions of programs within existing schools. The bill would have allowed for an authorizer or authorizing board to completely oversee and monitor a public charter school, completely limiting county board and state board management and control.

HB 4304 – Relating to PEIA employer and employee premiums. This bill would have changed the premiums for employers and employees from 80/20 to 75/25.

WVSSPA Opposed Bills that Died

HB 4465 – Salary Equity Bill. Passage of this bill would have eliminated the salary equity formula, resulting in a loss of potential increase in salary for counties currently out of equity.

SB 452 – Revising School Aid Formula.

HB 4466 – Relating to public school support. This bill would have created flexibility for schools in the use of school aid fund, however, the bill would have also allow for leniency in the use of funds formerly designated for school bus replacement.

Salary and Benefit Bills that never made it out of Committee

SB 114 – Increase service personnel pay over the five-year period.

HB 2163 – Increasing salaries for school service personnel.

HB 2183 – Relating to salary increase for school personnel.

HB 2389 – Granting \$1,000 annual salary increase for all public employees including service employees

HB 2414 – Salary increase for kindergarten aides and ECCATs who have more than twenty pupils per session.

HB 2791 – Increasing benefits of retired state personnel and retired teachers

WVSSPA Supported Bills that never made it out of Committee

SB 58 – Temporary reassignment of service personnel due to illness or injury.

SB 75 – Establishing cook meal ratios for full-day and half-day school cooks. Establishes 1-125 meals allotted for one cook position.

HB 2077 – Requiring county boards of education to provide released time for professional educators and service personnel when serving in an elected municipal or county office.

HB 2078 – Giving local authorities the authority to decrease the speed limit on streets and highways where school buses travel in its jurisdiction.

HB 4415 – Offsetting the shortfall of PEIA by reducing the compensation of all elected state officials and state BOE members.

HB 4469 – Providing a free lunch to all school employees in a school building.

HB 4703 – Reclassifying Early Childhood Classroom Assistant Teacher (ECCAT) I, II and III positions as Aide V, Aide VI and Aide VII positions. The purpose of this bill was to reclassify ECCATs as aides, and to provide a new pay grade for special education aides. This bill will protect ECCATs in the RIF and new hire processes.

HB 4719 – Allowing employees with an NAPT certification to be eligible for transportation management positions.

We want to thank our members and supporters for answering our Calls to Action this session!



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