



2025 Legislative Session Recap – What Washington Students Got and Next Steps

May 7, 2025 AI Summary

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Introduction

This webinar, hosted by Arik Korman, CEO at League of Education Voters, aimed to provide a comprehensive overview of the 2025 legislative session in Washington state, focusing on the impacts on education and next steps. The session featured various panelists representing different organizations and perspectives, including students, policy advocates, and education leaders.

Opening Remarks

Arik Korman began the webinar by introducing the League of Education Voters and its mission to create equitable learning environments for all Washington students. He emphasized the importance of education as a tool for justice and the need for radical changes in school systems to achieve equity, justice, and liberation. He also provided technical instructions for accessing closed captions and Spanish interpretation during the webinar.

Panelist Introductions

Each panelist briefly introduced themselves, highlighting their roles and affiliations:

- **Abby Hill:** A sophomore representing the Association for Washington Student Leaders, attending Spokane Valley Tech STEM Academy and Skill Center.
- **Ramona Hattendorf:** Director of Public Policy and Civic Engagement at the Arc of King County, advocating for the rights of people with intellectual and developmental disabilities.
- **Eli Taylor Goss:** Executive Director of the Washington State Budget and Policy Center, focusing on tax and state budget policy.
- **Katy Warren:** Deputy Director at the Washington State Association of Head Start and ECEAP, representing low-income preschool programs.
- **Carey Morris:** Government relations consultant and contract lobbyist with extensive experience in legislative sessions.

- **Jessica Winston:** Policy and Advocacy Manager at School's Out Washington, overseeing the Youth Development Strategy Table.
- **Jonathan Teeters:** Policy Director at Empire Health Foundation, investing in underserved communities in Spokane.
- **Ruben Flores:** Executive Director of the Council of Presidents, representing public baccalaureate universities in Washington State.
- **Jacob Vela:** Chief Policy Officer at League of Education Voters, focusing on education policy.

Legislative Session Overview

Carey Morris provided an overview of the 2025 legislative session, noting the challenges faced due to a significant budget deficit and the introduction of new members. Despite these hurdles, the legislature managed to pass a budget of approximately \$78 billion, including \$9 billion in new revenue and \$6 billion in program reductions. Key highlights included:

- **Special Education:** Historic investments, including the elimination of the 60% cap on funded enrollment, increased multipliers for funding, and extended services for infants and toddlers.
- **Local Effort Assistance (LEA):** Investments to allow property tax levies to be increased, although public charter schools were not included.
- **Parental Rights Bill (House Bill 1296):** Reaffirmed student rights and allocated funding to ensure non-discriminatory learning environments.

Key Legislative Wins and Losses

Abby Hill highlighted several legislative wins and losses from a student perspective:

- **Wins:**
 - **Senate Bill 5192:** Updated funding model for essential school materials and supplies, setting a new base allocation per full-time student.
 - **House Bill 1285:** Mandated financial education for high school graduation, starting with the class of 2031.
 - **House Bill 1722:** Reviewed and eliminated barriers to student participation in apprenticeships and internships.
- **Losses:**

- Concerns about the adequacy of funding in Senate Bill 5192, especially for technical and STEM schools.
- Delayed implementation of financial literacy courses, leaving another generation without widely accessible financial education.
- Reduced funding for student assistance programs, impacting mental health support.

Higher Education Challenges

Ruben Flores discussed the significant cuts to higher education, including reductions in financial aid programs and staffing. He emphasized the need for continued advocacy to address these challenges and support students. Key points included:

- Washington College Grant: Reduced funding, impacting eligibility and financial aid for students.
- Bridge Grants: Elimination of ancillary financial aid options.
- Federal Impacts: Catastrophic cuts proposed by the Federal Government, affecting research funding and programs like TRIO and Pell eligibility.

Special Education and Inclusion

Ramona Hattendorf shared positive developments in special education, such as the elimination of the cap on funded enrollment and increased multipliers for funding. She also highlighted efforts to reduce the use of isolation and restraint in schools. Key initiatives included:

- Early Supports for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT): Technical fixes to ensure access to early therapies.
- Inclusionary Practices: Statewide work to help schools be more inclusive and use multi-tiered support systems effectively.
- Elimination of Isolation and Restraint: \$4 million set aside to continue work in reducing harmful practices in schools.

Community and Social Impacts

Jonathan Teeters focused on broader social issues affecting families and students, such as rent stabilization and community reinvestment programs. He stressed the importance of addressing these issues to support students' overall well-being. Key points included:

- **Rent Stabilization:** Efforts to cap annual rent increases, although the final bill allowed up to 10% increases.
- **Community Reinvestment Program:** Funding to support communities impacted by the war on drugs, although reduced from initial requests.
- **Public Safety Funding:** Concerns about the allocation of funds to law enforcement versus community-based solutions.
- **Immigrant Communities:** Funding for legal services and healthcare coverage, although some requests were not fully met.

Early Learning

Katy Warren provided a detailed account of the cuts to early learning programs, including reductions in Washington state Early Childhood Education & Assistance Program (ECEAP) slots and the elimination of birth-to-three early ECEAP. She highlighted the need for increased advocacy to support early learning initiatives. Key points included:

- **ECEAP:** Delayed expansion to reach all eligible children, significant cuts to part-day slots, and elimination of birth-to-three early ECEAP.
- **Childcare Subsidy:** Delayed expansion of eligibility and rate increases, and changes to copayment structures.
- **Bright Spots:** \$99 million in capital investments for early learning facilities.

Youth Development

Jessica Winston discussed the severe reductions in funding for youth development programs and the need for sustainable, equitable state funding. She encouraged continued engagement with legislators to advocate for these programs. Key points included:

- **Funding Cuts:** 86% reduction in youth development funding, with only a few provisos renewed.
- **Advocacy Efforts:** Increased engagement with young people and new legislators, and plans for a youth advocacy committee.

Progressive Revenue Solutions

Eli Taylor Goss presented an analysis of the state's tax code and the need for progressive revenue solutions to address ongoing budget challenges. He outlined

potential options, such as a higher payroll tax and wealth tax, to ensure adequate funding for public services. Key points included:

- Historical Context: The antiquated tax code from 1935 and its inadequacy for modern needs.
- Revenue Package: A blend of progressive and regressive measures, with tweaks to the capital gains tax, estate tax, and business and occupation tax.
- Future Options: Higher payroll tax, wealth tax, and property tax reform to ensure equitable funding.

Conclusion and Next Steps

Jacob Vela summarized the changes to the levy system and the need for continued advocacy to address equity concerns. The webinar concluded with a call to action for participants to engage with legislators and advocate for progressive revenue and equitable funding.

Final Thoughts

Panelists shared their final thoughts, emphasizing the importance of continued advocacy, engaging with legislators, and focusing on the positive steps taken during the session. Abby Hill highlighted the need to focus on legislative wins and pursue ideas for future advocacy.

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