

# WASHINGTON STEM ADVOCACY COALITION NOTES

## 12/5/25

[Washington STEM Advocacy Website](#)

Coalition calls start January 5 and occur every Friday from 12:00pm-12:30pm throughout the session.

**ACTION:** Invite a colleague, changemaker, or leader. Please ask them to [sign up here](#) to join the 2026 Washington STEM Advocacy Coalition, receive notifications and information about future policy calls, and get updates on Coalition efforts.

### 2026 WASHINGTON STEM LEGISLATIVE PRIORITIES

Our 2026 priorities reflect our responsiveness to a short 60-day session, acknowledge the challenging budget landscape, and align with current lawmaker priorities.

#### **Advance Cross-Agency Early Learning-to-K12 Data Coordination**

- GOAL: Strengthen system alignment and understanding of public and private investments, leading to more accessible child care for families across the state.

#### **Support Funding for the Online High School and Beyond Plan Platform**

- GOAL: Ensure every student has access to meaningful, evidence-driven postsecondary and career planning tools shaped by community voice.

#### **Preserve Investments in Washington's Post Secondary Education and Career Pathways**

- GOAL: Sustain our financial aid and stackable career-connected learning experiences that are preparing students for high-demand opportunities, driving economic growth, and building a competitive, skilled workforce.

*Legislative One-Pager is [LIVE!](#)*

*View more information about our work and [2025-2027 Policy Platform on our website.](#)*

### 2026 GOVERNOR BUDGET & UPDATES FROM THE INTERIM

*Josh Apata, Policy Manager*

- 25-27 Biennium Budget began July 1. (Including Capital, Transportation and Operating)
- OFM issued [guidance](#) for the 2026 Supplemental Budget process in June with Agency Decision Packages due September 15 .
- OFM and the Governor's office will use this information as Governor Ferguson plans his 2026 Budget Proposal.
- Guidance included an ask to limit requests and examine spending for efficiency.
- Agency budget request website is currently not available but we will share more in January.

### COMMITTEE DAYS AND WHAT TO EXPECT THIS SESSION:

*Jayme Shoun, Director of Policy and Government Affairs*

What to expect this session:

- Top line: another tough budget year.
- In 2025, the legislature passed a \$77B budget that also included new revenue generation. Revenue continues to be a challenge with the most recent forecasts trending down. This means another challenging budget year. 2026 is a Supplemental Session.
- Governor Ferguson just recently shared to anticipate an “all-cuts budget.” as he proposes his first full budget next week. He has also made it clear he is not interested in new property or income tax.
- Ways and Means Chair, Sen. June Robinson (38<sup>th</sup> LD) has stated ““I will not be soliciting or accepting any member requests for the operating budget in the upcoming session,” [\(WA State Standard Article\)](#)- a message that has been shared with lawmakers and evident in interim and recent discussions.
- The Federal uncertainty in funding to the state also is top of mind for lawmakers and may require action this session to cover funding cuts.
- There is still interest and action from some lawmakers who moving forward with revenue proposals, both prefilled and emerging this session.
- We will provide an analysis of the Governor’s budget and highlights on our website once released.

2025 Committee Days:

- Legislative committees convened this week for robust work sessions. These work sessions provide opportunity for the committee to learn, receive updates, and continue the work and interests of the committee from the interim.
- Notable sessions below:
  - Joint Higher Education Committee (Dec 3)
    - Agenda included a comprehensive overview of the WEIA account
    - [TVW Link](#)
    - [Resources](#)
  - House Education Committee (Dec 4)
    - Agenda included updates from CTE focused programs.
    - [TVW Link](#)
    - [Resources](#)
  - Senate Early Learning & K12 Committee (Dec 4)
    - Agenda included AI in education, highlighting Quincy SD and Peninsula SD
    - [TVW Link](#)
    - [Resources](#)
  - Senate Higher Education & Workforce Development Committee (Dec 4)
    - Agenda included updates from SBCTC
    - [TVW Link](#) (Video)
    - [Resources](#)
  - House Postsecondary Education & Workforce Development Committee (Dec 5)
    - Agenda included an update on the High School and Beyond Plan
    - [TVW Link \(Video\)](#)

- [Resources](#)
- 60-day session will begin January 12.

### **PARTNER PRIORITIES:**

**NEW:** if you have priorities or action you want to share with the coalition, we are uploading resources and one pagers into this shared [Google folder](#). You can also reach out to Jayme directly at [jayme@washingtonstem.org](mailto:jayme@washingtonstem.org). We will leave space at every call to hear from partners. Below is what was shared today- thank you partners!

- State Board of Education, Yazmin Carretero
  - Legislative Platform: Protect recent progress and prevent further K12 cuts, restore funding for the HSBP, and funding for school-community partnerships including the request to restore funding for Treehouse's Graduation Success Program. (see the one-pager for more)
  - [Future Ready Work](#): This link includes all updates, executive summaries from each meeting, and our interim report.
  - [Informational Webinar](#): We are partnering with LEV to host a webinar on graduation requirements and our Future Ready work on December 18. Register today!
- Stand for Children WA, Myle Tang
  - Continue funding for the Ninth Grade Success program. The Ninth Grade Success Initiative is now in 53 schools across 37 school districts (from an initial pilot in 5 districts in 2019-2020). Schools are reporting year-over-year increases in Ninth Grade On-Track rates! The Ninth Grade Success Initiative sets up 13,000 students to graduate on time each year and funding was provided for one year- asking for continued funding. ([Learn more on website](#))
- Washington Communities for Children, Rachel Hall
  - Pierce County Early Childhood Network (PCECN) and Family Connects is requesting \$1m to continue funding for the network that provides essential services to families and children in Pierce County. Funding was provided for 1 year last session, the ask is to continue funding for FY 27. ([One Pager available](#))

### **RESOURCES AND LINKS:**

#### News/Press Articles:

- Video: [Governor Ferguson Answers Reporters Questions](#) (as he certifies election results)
- [Money crunch puts kibosh on WA state lawmakers' wish lists](#) — Washington State Standard, by Jerry Cornfield (November 6, 2025)
- [WA Gov. Bob Ferguson says his budget will rely on cuts — not taxes —](#) The Seattle Times
- Video: [WA state budget proposal in the works](#) — YouTube video (Fox13 News Seattle)

#### Information from Agencies:

- [Forecasts](#) — Economic and Revenue Forecast Council (ERFC), Washington State
- [Budget Resources](#)- Office of Financial Management, Washington State

**Washington STEM 2025-2028 Strategic Plan: Keystones and Barriers:** Keystones are central principles or parts of a system on which all other parts of the system rely to thrive, often applied to architectural and ecological systems. We adopted this term to outline our long-term vision for the education system and to identify the key elements for its success. In addition to keystones, we have also recognized the barriers that Washington STEM is uniquely positioned to have influence to ensure the keystones of our education system serve all students.  
[Read more here](#)

- **Keystone #1: All learners have equitable access to high quality early care and education.**
  - Barrier 1: Lack of useful, population-specific data to guide decision making.
  - Barrier 2: Data capacity & use: when data is accessible, state and local leaders need support to use it for making changes in ECE policies, practices, and procedures.
- **Keystone #2: All learners graduate STEM literate, with the knowledge, skills, and sense of belonging to thrive in their chosen career path and to solve local and global problems.**
  - Barrier: Lack of cohesive approach and coordinated action towards STEM literacy.
- **Keystone #3: All learners have access to multiple, equitable and accessible pathways to credentials and careers; and all learners are supported as they bridge the high school to postsecondary transition.**
  - Barrier 1: Lack of cohesive pathways: Many institutions of higher education lack cohesive pathways from credentials to careers.
  - Barrier 2: Lack of cohesive career readiness approach: Our state lacks a cohesive approach to supporting students' postsecondary aspirations & transitions.

### **What's next?**

- We will host Friday calls throughout the session and as always, will send comprehensive notes after.
- The **Bill Tracker and Weekly Notes** will be available on [Washington STEM's Advocacy page](#). Our tracker includes a wide swath of bills throughout the session that align with our shared goals. And are critical to creating the enabling conditions for students to thrive.
- If you know a fellow changemaker, colleague, or leader- please invite them to these calls. Please use the sign-up form as this ensures we have the most up-to-date contact information.
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Learn more on our website: <https://washingtonstem.org/advocacy>

The WA STEM Advocacy Coalition exists to collect and disseminate information pertaining to statewide education policy. We exist to provide feedback and evidence-based recommendations to the Legislature. *Joining our weekly informational sessions to hear updates on our policy and advocacy does not in itself constitute lobbying.*