

WOVE Legislative Update for Career and Technical Education

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The 2025 Washington State Legislative Session adjourned Sine Die on April 27 after 105 days of deliberation, marked by significant policy shifts and fiscal challenges due to previous spending decisions. Under the leadership of Governor Bob Ferguson, the Democratic-supermajority controlled legislature addressed a projected \$12 billion budget shortfall through a combination of the largest tax increases in state history, spending cuts, and progressive policy reforms. The 2025–27 operating budget appropriates \$77.872 billion, an increase of \$5.927 billion (8.2%) over enacted 2023–25 appropriations.

This version of the *WOVE* will go through a comparison of K-12 education spending in the operating budgets for the 2023-2025 and 2025-2027 biennia, highlighting differences and similarities. The budget significantly increased K-12 education funding, described as the largest investment since the McCleary decision, with \$33.6 billion allocated to K-12 education, a 7% increase from the prior biennium. This included \$521 million for salary adjustments and healthcare cost increases for K-12 educators, \$900 million for special education, and \$1.3 billion for teacher and staff salary increases.

Category	2023-2025 Biennial Budget	2025-2027 Biennial Budget	Key Differences/Notes
Total K-12 Spending	\$30.6 billion	\$33.6 billion	7% increase (\$3 billion more in 2025-2027). Reflects inflation, population growth, and targeted investments, particularly in special education.
Special Education	Funded to meet federal/state mandates, but districts reported gaps, relying on local levies.	\$900 million additional funding, including \$750 million over four years to address mandates and reduce levy reliance.	Significant boost in 2025-2027 to close funding gaps.
Teacher and Staff Compensation	Baseline allocations	\$1.3 billion for salary increases to retain educators amid rising costs.	Similar investment , but 2025-2027 emphasizes retention due to higher living costs. Specific paraeducator raises proposed, but not mandated in both.

Category	2023-2025 Biennial Budget	2025-2027 Biennial Budget	Key Differences/Notes
Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC)	\$1,483.44 per student (2023-2024), increased to \$1,504.44 in 2024 supplemental budget.	\$213 million additional funding; prior proposals suggest \$1,533.02 per student (2024-2025).	Modest increase in 2025-2027 to cover rising costs, but advocates note it falls short of \$400 per student needed to match inflation since 2019.
Local Effort Assistance (LEA)	Funding to support low-income districts.	\$200 million to support low-income districts.	Explicit allocation in 2025-2027 enhances equity focus for low-income districts.
Other Programs	\$620,000 students received summer food stipends; 70% of students benefited from sustained school food services.	Continued support via Education Legacy Trust Account (ELTA), with revenue increasing to \$2.483 billion from \$2.118 billion.	Increased ELTA revenue in 2025-2027 supports K-12 and related programs; food stipends likely sustained, but not detailed.
Percentage of State Budget	43.1% of general fund dedicated to K-12 education.	43.07% of general fund dedicated to K-12.	Slight decline in share over years (52.4% five years prior).

Summary of Key Differences:

- **Spending Increase:** 2025-2027 allocates \$33.6 billion, a 7% increase from \$30.6 billion in 2023-2025, driven by inflation and student needs.
- **Special Education:** 2025-2027 significantly boosts funding (\$900 million) to reduce levy reliance, unlike 2023-2025’s underfunded approach.
- **Equity Focus:** 2025-2027 explicitly allocates \$200 million for LEA, enhancing support for low-income districts compared to less detailed 2023-2025 funding.
- **Fiscal Context:** 2023-2025 had robust new investments (\$2.4 billion/year), while 2025-2027 scales back (\$500 million/year) to manage a deficit, yet prioritizes K-12.

Concerns from Testimony:

- The 2025-2027 budget’s 6.5% spending growth outpaces economic growth (4.5%), raising sustainability concerns.
- Special education and LEA investments in 2025-2027 address equity and compliance, but may still fall short of full needs as stated by advocates.

CTE-Specific Investments:

- The budget supported CTE through general K-12 funding, including allocations for Materials, Supplies, and Operating Costs (MSOC), which cover CTE program needs.
- The budget included \$521 million for K-12 educator salary adjustments and healthcare costs, a portion of which supported CTE instructors, as they are part of the K-12 workforce.
- **Estimated CTE Spending:** While a precise CTE line-item is not explicitly stated, estimates based on K-12 funding and CTE’s proportional share (given its enrollment and program scope) suggest state CTE spending in the range of \$100–\$200 million biennially, including staff salaries, equipment, and program operations, supplemented by federal Perkins funds.
- The WAVE scholarship program continued with sustained funding, estimated at \$1 million biennially, to support CTE students pursuing postsecondary education or training. Governor

Inslee’s proposed budget explicitly increased ongoing support for WAVE, maintaining awards for up to 147 students annually.


- OSPI’s 2025-2027 budget requests included enhancements for equitable access to dual credit programs, which often intersect with CTE pathways (e.g., Running Start or College in the High School). This request is aimed to reduce barriers to credential attainment, directly supporting CTE students.
- Federal Perkins V funding remained stable at approximately \$26 million annually, supplementing state efforts for CTE program development and evaluation.
- Enrollment and Program Expansion: CTE enrollment trends remained strong, with continued emphasis on career pathways. The budget prioritized career-connected learning, aligning with state goals to increase postsecondary credential attainment (e.g., 43.8% of associate degrees and certificates awarded in Washington are CTE-related).
- 2025-2027: Proposals like Senate Bill 5192 sought a \$300 million MSOC increase, part of which would directly benefit CTE by funding materials and supplies for hands-on learning. This represents a more explicit focus on operational costs.
- 2025-2027: OSPI’s budget request included \$20 million for dual credit access, reducing barriers for CTE students to earn postsecondary credits or credentials.

Throughout the course of the session we saw well over 1,500 bills get introduced and debated. In [this document](#) you can see the bills that made it to the finish line. Quite a long list, but we deliver it with hyperlinks so you can easily view the bills and their journey through the legislative process.

WOVE Bill Status Report

Bill #	Abbrev. Title	Short Description	Status	Sponsor	Position	Priority
SHB 1121	Work restrictions/age 16, 17	Concerning restrictions on the working conditions and hours of sixteen- and seventeen-year olds.	C 79 L 25	McClintock	Support	
HB 1167	Maritime careers task force	Directing the statewide career and technical education task force to consider educational opportunities for careers in maritime professions.	Del to Gov	Shavers	Support	
SHB 1198 (ESSB 5167)	Operating budget	Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium operating appropriations.	H Rules R	Ormsby		
SHB 1216 (SSB 5195)	Capital budget	Concerning the capital budget.	H Rules R	Tharinger		
2SHB 1273	Dual credit program access	Improving student access to dual credit programs.	C 104 L 25	Paul	Concerns	
2SHB 1285	Financial education	Making financial education instruction a graduation requirement in public schools.	H Rules 3C	Rude	Support	
ESHB 1414	CTE careers work group	Improving access to career opportunities for students.	C 61 L 25	Connors		
HB 1556 (SB 5542)	HS completers/CTC tuition	Expanding tuition waivers for high school completers at community and technical colleges.	C 42 L 25	Entenman		
SHB 2077 (SB 5811)	Zero-emission vehicle prg.	Establishing a tax on certain business activities related to surpluses generated under the zero-emission vehicle program.	Del to Gov	Fitzgibbon		
ESHB 2081 (SB 5815)	Business and occupation tax	Modifying business and occupation tax surcharges, rates, and the advanced computing surcharge cap, clarifying the business and occupation tax deduction for certain investments, and creating a temporary business and occupation tax surcharge on large companies.	Del to Gov	Fitzgibbon		
ESSB 5009	Student transp. vehicles	Modifying the student transportation allocation to accommodate multiple vehicle types for transporting students.	Del to Gov	Braun		
ESSB 5167 (SHB 1198)	Operating budget	Making 2025-2027 fiscal biennium operating appropriations.	Del to Gov	Robinson		

SB 5189	Competency-based education	Supporting the implementation of competency-based education.	Del to Gov	Wellman		
ESSB 5192	School district materials	Concerning school district materials, supplies, and operating costs.	Del to Gov	Nobles	Support	Medium
SSB 5195 (SHB 1216)	Capital budget	Concerning the capital budget.	Del to Gov	Trudeau		
2SSB 5358 (HB 1280)	Career & tech. ed./6th grade	Concerning career and technical education in sixth grade.	C 134 L 25	Braun	Support	
ESSB 5794	Tax preferences	Adopting recommendations from the tax preference performance review process, eliminating obsolete tax preferences, clarifying legislative intent, and addressing changes in constitutional law.	Del to Gov	Salomon		

	<p>Federal Legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ACTE Advocacy Webpage • CTE Policy Watch Blog • Take Action • ACTE Policy Agenda • Advocacy Resources
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WOVE...Representing the Career and Technical Education field through advocacy activities, which promotes the value of CTE and the policies that are needed to support CTE practitioners, advance the field, and improve student learning. To subscribe to the *WOVE Legislative Update* or to view past issues, [please click here](#).