

WSPTA Legislative Assembly Wrap-Up 2021

The 2021 WSPTA Legislative Assembly was again virtual due to current safety requirements. But, as always, our PTA leaders and members made it work and it was a great weekend!

The two-day event began on Saturday with a general session to handle some basic business including presenting the credentials report, adopting the standing rules and agenda, and appointing the minutes committee. The best part of this general session was a panel “What do parents need to know about how the pandemic has affected kids?” with two pediatricians from the Washington Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics and the Director of Anxiety Programs from Seattle Children's Hospital. This panel was incredibly informative and engaging!

After the general session, attendees were shown educational videos for the five resolutions under consideration. These 5-minute videos educated delegates on the topic or problem being addressed, how it would improve the lives of children across Washington state, and why they should support the proposal. This was an easy and helpful way for all attendees to learn about the resolutions before we began the Q&A/Caucus sessions. There was a different session for each of the proposed resolutions where attendees could ask the submitters questions, and then delegates could strategize for the debate time on Sunday, as well as work on any needed amendments to the proposed resolutions.

Saturday had two more great panels, “How are school districts recovering from COVID?” that focused on how federal funding and state agencies are helping school districts and students recover in the aftermath of the pandemic and “Advocating for recovery: What's on the agenda for 2022?” where we heard what other education-related organizations are advocating for during the 2022 legislative session and how it aligned with WSPTA priorities.

Day two started with a general session that celebrated recent advocacy award winners in Washington State and the great work they do, as well as a legislative session recap, a preview of 2022, and a federal legislative update. The final panel of the weekend was “Coping with COVID through the eyes of students” where we heard from six students around the state, including one from Everett. The students were absolutely incredible and shared how the pandemic affected them – their health, well-being, and education. Students are at the center of everything we do, so it was fantastic hearing directly from them!

We ended the weekend considering the five proposals – three new resolutions and updates to two existing resolutions:

- Improving Literacy and Educational Outcomes (new)
- Increasing Access and Affordability of Post-Secondary Education (new – we retired two old resolutions related to this topic)
- Improving Outcomes for Children and Youth in Highly Mobile Populations (new – we retired one old resolution related to this topic)
- School Construction Bond Reform (updated an existing resolution)
- Student Assessment and Testing (updated an existing resolution)

During debate and voting, two of the resolutions were amended and all five were ultimately adopted and added to the WSPTA platform.

You can learn more about legislative assembly here <https://www.wastatepta.org/events-programs/legislative-assembly/> and more about WSPTA's resolutions here <https://www.wastatepta.org/focus-areas/advocacy/resolutions/>

Happy advocating,

Michelle Nims

Advocacy Chair, HM Jackson High PTSA 7.3.95