



Board of Governors Meeting Recap

July 24-25, 2026

A summary prepared by the WSBA of the Board of Governors meeting held July 24-25, 2026, in Tulalip, WA. The agenda, materials, and video recording from this Board meeting are posted online. The next regular meeting is Sept. 24-25 in Spokane. The Board is the WSBA's governing body charged with determining general policies of the WSBA and approving its annual budget. To subscribe to the Board Meeting Notification list, email barleaders@wsba.org.

TOP TAKEAWAYS

Financial Updates. Congratulations to Gov. Alain Villeneuve, who was elected as incoming WSBA Treasurer, to assume office at the beginning of the new fiscal year in October. The Board also looked at the first draft of the FY 2027 budget, which proposes a planned spenddown of about \$1.2 million in the general fund, in alignment with the Board's reserve-fund safeguards. (Note: The 2027 license fees were already set last year using the Board's [license fee policy](#).) The Board is expected to approve a final FY27 budget in September. Anyone that would like to learn more and observe and comment on how the budget develops between now and then is encouraged to join a [Budget and Audit Committee meeting](#). ([See page 115](#).)

It's Easy to Make a Big Difference on Constitution Day. The Washington Supreme Court and WSBA are asking all legal professionals to celebrate Constitution Day (Sept. 17) in a joyful and meaningful way—by volunteering in a local classroom to engage students about our nation's founding document. Not sure how to start or what to present? As part of the AOC's established [Lawyers in the Classroom](#) program, we have you covered—with turnkey lessons and step-by-step guides to connecting with a school; we even have two lunch-and-learn seminars coming up with your colleagues' expert tips and tricks to crush it in the classroom (sign up for "[Lessons from the Classrooms](#)" on Aug. 6 and/or "[Build Your Lessons with Us](#)" on Aug. 20. Can you imagine hundreds and hundreds of legal professionals across Washington connecting with students this September? We need you to make that happen. [Sign up here](#).

CLE Credit for Mock Trials (and Colorado)! The Board accepted a recommendation from the MCLE Board—which will now go to the Washington Supreme Court for consideration—to amend APR 11 to establish MCLE credit for lawyer volunteers who judge or evaluate student participants in approved high-school or undergraduate mock trials ([see page 196](#)); and to establish MCLE comity with Colorado, which has reporting requirements and cycles that align with Washington's ([see page 216](#)). So, once again: *Go out there and get involved with students!*

OTHER BUSINESS

Legal Technology Task Force Implementation. The WSBA Legal Technology Task Force delivered its [final report](#) in September 2025. The report organizes ten key points and includes operational recommendations (for staff implementation) and policy recommendations (for Board implementation). At the July meeting, the Board considered several recommendations about how to move forward with policy recommendations and heard updates about how staff have begun implementing operational work. ([See page 226.](#))

Reconsidering Change to “Approved Law Schools” to Sit for the Bar. In May, the Board changed the definition of “approved law schools” that is used to determine applicant eligibility to sit for the bar exam in Washington. The change in the WSBA Admissions Policies expands the definition beyond “ABA-approved” law schools to include law schools that are approved in any other state for bar-exam eligibility and admissions. ([See page 153.](#)) The Washington Supreme Court already licenses practitioners from these schools [through its admissions by motion](#) process. At the July meeting, law school deans and law students spoke for and against the change; several asked the Board to push out the effective date from September to a later time to consider more feedback and information. One Governor informed the Board that he intends to bring a motion to rescind the new definition at the September meeting.

Other Regulatory Proposals Regarding Bar Exam and Admissions. The Board approved several recommendations to amend Admission to Practice Rules (APR) and WSBA Bylaws that relate to Bar admissions and licensing. The amendments:

- Establish a new lawyer license type to comply with the U.S. Servicemember Civil Relief Act. ([See page 296.](#))
- Change the filing deadline for testing accommodation requests for the NextGen Uniform Bar Exam. ([See page 305.](#))
- Eliminate the expiration of bar exam scores and remove the requirement to pass the bar exam for a current WSBA member returning to active status. ([See page 312.](#))
- Eliminate outdated and exclusionary language and reduce the active legal experience required for a lawyer from a common law jurisdiction to sit for the bar exam in Washington. ([See page 324.](#))

The Board also declined to take action on a proposed change to the definition of “active legal experience” (used primarily as a requirement for someone who is applying for admission by motion) to gather more information for consideration in September. ([See page 328.](#))

RPC Comments Regarding Artificial Intelligence. The Board approved a proposal by the Committee on Professional Ethics (CPE) that the WSBA serve as co-proponent with the Washington Supreme Court Clerk in submitting RPC amendments regarding the legal ethics of artificial intelligence (AI). The amendments to the commentary to RPC 1, 3, 5, 7 and 8 were initially developed by the Court, after which the Clerk and the CPE collaborated to refine the drafts. The comments are meant to assist lawyers in the responsible and ethical use of AI technologies in legal practice; they cover use, disclosure, firm policymaking and supervision, fees, bias, and accurate review of AI in providing legal services. ([See page 99.](#))

ATJ Board Seeking to Update Its Authorizing Order. The Board heard an update about the Access to Justice (ATJ) Board’s efforts to evolve its mission and work to support and expand civil legal aid—to those who need it and to the partner organizations who provide it. ATJ Board leaders recently completed a community-centered strategic planning process and collected substantial input from stakeholders. It became clear that the board’s Authorizing Order, originally adopted in 1994, needed an update as well; board members are now modernizing the order with revisions

focused on: Centering community so those most affected by civil legal systems have a meaningful role in shaping decisions; addressing the need for capacity for the growing amount of work by adding five new seats; using plain and accessible language; and clarifying the ATJ Board's function as a statewide convener, partner, and supporter of civil legal aid. ATJ leaders have done significant outreach to stakeholder communities. They will review the feedback and make changes in the next month or so before presenting the proposed order to the Washington Supreme Court this fall. To learn more, email atj@wsba.org.

New Charter for the Washington New Members Committee. The Washington New Members Committee is the evolved form of the former Washington Young Lawyers Committee—and that evolution has required a new charter to fit its new vision and purpose statement: To support the professional development of new members of the WSBA through mentorship, leadership opportunities, and resources that address critical challenges such as student debt, practical skills gap, and pro bono opportunities. The Board approved the committee's proposed new charter, and that framework will now establish a defined structure, scope, and set of responsibilities for the committee, while addressing longstanding vacancy issues by transitioning from regional to congressional district representation, consistent with the structure of the WSBA Board of Governors. ([See page 277.](#))

The Board also:

- Approved a recommendation from the Budget & Audit Committee to reallocate \$150,000 from the unrestricted reserve to the facilities reserve. This aligns with the Board's policy to annually build the facilities reserve incrementally. ([See page 182.](#))
- Discussed proposed changes to admissions application fees, including an increase to the application fee for Rule 9 licensed legal interns, establishment of an application fee for the new admissions pathway (portfolio evaluation), and an increase to lawyer applicant fees for the bar exam and UBE score transfer applicants. The Board expects to vote in September. ([See page 188.](#))
- Discussed proposed revisions to the WSBA License Fee Policy to include other categories of licensure; the Board expects to vote in September. ([See page 184.](#))
- Approved a suggested change to RAP 3.2 (substitution of parties in the event of a death or change of status) as recommended by the Court Rules and Procedures Committee; the amendment would better align language in the rule with analogous civil rules and federal rules of appellate procedure. The suggested amendment will now go to the Washington Supreme Court for consideration. ([See page 292.](#))