

SAMLN19 Legislative Update 21 4-25-19 3:30 pm

Hi SAMLN19 Members!

The negotiations on early childhood continued behind the scenes through the night. Below are a couple of news stories covering the issue, and the bizarre final deal making possibly linking the action on the Colstrip bill with preschool funding...

- [MT Legislature hung up on preschool, Colstrip in final moments](#)
- [Public preschool still not settled as Montana legislators haggle over budget](#)

This morning the [SB 352](#) Conference Committee was scheduled to reconvene but that meeting was postponed until 1:00 pm after the final resolve had been determined regarding the Colstrip bill (was not allowed to resurface in the bills that were left to have it stay alive). The Speaker of the House replaced Rep Glimm (who was absent from Helena today) with Rep Matt Regier on the SB 352 Conference Committee by motion in the House session at about 11:00 am. The new SB 352 Conference Committee (Sen Thomas (R) – Chair, Sen Osmundson (R), Sen Sesso (D), Rep Balance (R), Rep Regier (R), Rep Lynch (D)) met at 1:15 pm and took action on more amendments to this massive bill. The first amendment was a technical change that passed. Then Preschool amendments were considered. No public comment was allowed.

- Preschool amendment ([SB0352 55-apm](#)) that eliminates the department of early childhood (DEC) and places the Department of Health and Human Services and the Director of that department in charge of using public funds to support private preschool programs. This amendment basically is the same as the version failed yesterday but replaces the DEC with the DPHHS. The appropriation is approximately \$16 million. **Failed 2-4 all R's against.**
- The ([SB035267-apm](#)) has an \$11 million appropriation for the biennium of bridge funding for Stars Preschool Grants and Federal Preschool Grants. **Failed 2-4 all R's against.**

The Conference Committee moved to pass SB 352 as amended, **Passed 4-2 all D's against.** The Conference Committee adjourned at about 1:35 PM.

The Senate convened at 2:00 PM and considered final resolution bills and Adjourned Sine Die at about 2:45 PM.

The House convened at 2:20 PM for finishing the 2nd agenda for the day, recessed at 2:50 PM to prepare the 3rd agenda for the day. The House reconvened at 3:10 PM for consideration of the 3rd agenda. Motion to Adjourn Sine Die at 3:30 PM, passed 62-36.

Reflecting on this day, I report a hollow feeling about the close of the session and how preschool was wrapped up in the final deals to bring the 66th legislative session to an end. The 2019 legislature left us with no preschool and also with no bad policy (privatization with public funds) that would harm our schools into the future.

I will prepare Legislative Update 22 tomorrow and begin the recap of this session. My thanks to all of you in the SAM Legislative Network 2019 for your commitment to advocacy!

Kirk