

Hi SAMLN19!

Highlights of Week 16 (April 22 – April 27)

This week was the final week of the 66th legislative session. The legislature adjourned sine die at 3:30 pm on Thursday, April 25! A small number of bills followed by SAM were still in consideration in Conference Committees. We remained vigilant during the week to ensure that preschool bills (or amended language into bills still alive) had language that establishes public preschool without the extending privatization with public funds or creating a new department of early childhood. In the end, the legislature adjourned with many positive actions for our schools, unfortunately with no preschool, but also with no bad policy (regarding privatization with public funds) developed in law that would cause future harm to our schools and the children we serve.

On Wednesday morning, the [SB 352](#) Conference Committee met to take action on about 10 amendments to this massive bill. The Preschool amendment offered was [SB0352 98-apm 4.24.19](#) and discussed by the Committee following presentation of the content of the amendment by Legislative Services education bill drafter Pad McCracken. A [PreKGraphic 4.24.19](#) of the amendment was presented by Pad. The amendment clearly would have put in law the use of public funds for private preschool programs, would have established a separate department of early childhood overriding the authority of the Board of Public Education and school boards to develop programs for Montana's schools. Further, the amendment had no fair distribution of how much funding would go to public preschools, private preschools or headstart preschools. This amendment also did significant damage to the current rules for qualifying for "exceptional circumstances" eliminating funding for those students in school districts already claiming preschool students under the rule. The amendment failed 2-4 (all R's against).

On Thursday, Preschool amendments were considered, but no public comment was allowed. Amendment [SB0352 55-apm](#) would have eliminated the department of early childhood (DEC) and placed 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 was the same as the version failed Wednesday but replaced the DEC with the DPHHS. The appropriation is approximately \$16 million. The amendment failed 2-4 (all R's against). The [SB035267-apm](#) amendment had an \$11 million appropriation for the biennium of bridge funding for Stars Preschool Grants and Federal Preschool Grants. It failed 2-4 (all R's against).

The following Legislative Updates were sent throughout the week: [SAMLN19 Legislative Update 19 with CALL TO ACTION 4-23-19](#), [SAMLN19 Legislative Update 20 4-24-19](#), and [SAMLN19 Legislative Update 21 4-25-19](#).

[SAM Followed Bills 4-26-19](#) finished the session with 138 bills with being monitored. [SAM Followed Bills Priority Status 4-26-19](#) included bills in SAM's advocacy priorities – Support Adequate and Equitable School Funding (28 bills), Support Recruitment and Retention of Quality Educators (5 bills), Oppose Privatization with Public Funds (1 bill), Support Facility and Technology Infrastructure (6 bills), Support School Based Mental Health Services (5 bills), and Other SAM Followed Bills (49 bills). SAM provided testimony in committees 94 times on SAM Followed Bills, see that information in the [SAM Testimony Log 2019 Legislative Session Final 4-25-19](#).

SAMLN19 Legislative Update 22: Week 16 (Apr 22 - 27) 4-26-19



Each of the links in this Update are on the [SAMLN19](#) webpage. The [SAMLN19 Legislative Update 22 Podcast 4-26-19](#) has been prepared so you can listen to the events of the week.

I'm in the process of completing a session end Report of SAM's advocacy. Understand that several bills that have passed the session are currently awaiting the Governor's signature before becoming law. A concern at this point would be that the Governor had set a target of retaining a \$300 million ending fund balance and at the end of the session the ending fund balance is estimated to be approximately \$210 million. At the current time 300 bills are awaiting decisions of the Governor for approval or veto, and if a bill has an appropriation in it, it is potentially at-risk of veto because of the \$90 million differential in the current ending fund balance. The next 2 weeks will clear up the final outcome of all bills that have become law in the 66th legislative session.

Thank you SAM Legislative Network 2019 for your outstanding advocacy work for SAM during the 2019 session!

Kirk

Please use the SAM website (www.sammt.org) as a resource for all things legislative under 'Advocacy', then [2019 Legislative Session](#). All information for the SAMLN19 is posted on the [SAMLN19](#) webpage – including this first SAMLN Update.

General Information

Click on the items in [blue underline font](#) as they are links that will go directly to the item.

For a copy of the bills, click on the bill number (e.g. [HB 1](#)) or go to [LAWS](#).

All Bills being followed by SAM can be found on the [SAM Bills 2019](#).

[Contact a Legislator](#) (not ready yet at the time of this writing) site is on the [2019 Legislature](#) webpage. You can use the [Online Message Form](#).

You may also [Watch or Listen](#) to live and upcoming meeting and hearings. Just click on the meeting or hearing that is on the schedule.

[2019 SAM Legislative Session](#) webpage.

[SAMLN19 Rules of Conduct for Political Activity and Advocacy](#).

[SAMLN19 Effective Advocacy PowerPoint](#).

[SAMLN19 'How to Provide Testimony on a Bill' Video](#).

[SAMLN19 Community Forum](#).

[Legislator Contact Info by School District](#)