

SAM Exec Director Email to MASS Board Members RE 2017 Legislative Session and HB 2 – HB 647 Impacts 5-2-17

Fwd: WMASS and the Legislative session

1 message

Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org>

Tue, May 2, 2017 at 7:19 PM

To: MASSBoard@sammt.org

Cc: "samkm@sammt.org" <samkm@sammt.org>, Pat Audet <sampa@sammt.org>, "mt-pec@sammt.org" <mt-pec@sammt.org>

Hi MASS Board Members,

Thanks Robert for the analysis you have completed and that you will be sharing with the 4 Rivers MASS tomorrow, 5/3/17. Robert and I had a good discussion about the analysis he prepared (though I have not checked the \$\$ amounts being described in the analysis) and also about the legislative session. A main emphasis that I believe needs to be shared is that school district leaders need to be able to explain what is happening in their school district with budgets and with taxation (like you always do), they also need to be able to clearly explain what in this scenario is their local decision making and what is the result of the legislative session. This will be a key concept in helping your Boards and communities understand the foundation of support for our public schools is a shared responsibility, and it always has been.

As explained earlier today in the email to our MASS leadership, MT-PEC intends to get information about the impact of HB 2 and HB 647 from the 2017 legislative session out to all trustees, administrators, business officials, and teachers on Friday. The double checking of all numbers and bullet points of explanation will hopefully be helpful to you in explaining to your community what I have described above. How you describe this may actually impact how your community understands it and also the future success of funding for our schools in the legislative sessions in the future. Thank you for being aware of this and for your great effort to understand and explain, like you do with almost every single thing that happens in your district.

An example could be, even in the sheet that Robert has prepared... The column that says -- "Cost to the Local Taxpayers" -- could also be titled -- "Cuts to District Budgets resulting from state shortfall in revenue". If you are following me, I hope you see how important it is to know that what resulted from the session was school districts' ability to retain their budget authority in whole and no reductions to the components of the funding formula. The legislature has the responsibility to determine what state funding is for schools and how it should be distributed. The legislative body faced a shortfall (and the state continues to face a shortfall) leaving them a few options to resolve that -- 1. Raise revenue (tax increases which did not happen in any great way during the session - many legislators pledged no tax increase before they got elected), 2. Cut to resolve the shortfall (which they did in a big way in many agencies and operations around the state - not so much in K-12 education), 3. Tax shift so the state budget can be balanced (this happened in many ways in this session), or a combination of the 3 scenarios. The local school district is not responsible for the legislature's duties and responsibilities, but must work with the legislature in funding our schools. This is where your explanation to your community comes into play. I suggest that you take responsibility for the things you have asked your local taxpayers for -- today's levies, bond issues, building reserves, and technology fund requests -- and further, be able to state the facts about other taxation issues that resulted from the legislative session (without insinuating blame -- just wasn't something in your sphere of responsibility).

This is just an old, experienced Superintendent, hoping to help all of our SAM members with, what I know and understand, is a big responsibility on your shoulders. I hope this is helpful to you all and I hope that the facts and impacts coming on Friday will help you be able to "tell the story" in an understandable way in your community. Thanks to all of you for what you do!

Kirk

----- Forwarded message -----

From: **Robert DoBell** <rdobell@threeforks.k12.mt.us>

Date: Tue, May 2, 2017 at 5:29 PM

Subject: Re: WMASS and the Legislative session

To: Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org>, Mike Perry <mperry@hotsprings.k12.mt.us>

Cc: Kimberly Scofield <samks@sammt.org>, MASSBoard@sammt.org, Pat Audet <sampa@sammt.org>

Colleagues,

Hello there I have been working on a spreadsheet for our 4 Rivers MASS region on the impact of HB 2 and HB 647... It is attached for your information...



HB 2 and HB 647 Impact 5-2-17.pdf

On Tue, May 2, 2017 at 11:25 AM Kirk Miller <samkm@sammt.org> wrote:

Hi Mike (Dr. P) and MASS Board of Directors,

I was forwarded an email from Mike Love to you requesting whether background on the fiscal impact of legislation will be provided at the WMASS meeting this week. I'm copying to you the article I placed in the SAM Bulletin that went to all SAM members yesterday. It provides an overview of the SAM Advocacy priorities during the session and the resulting progress. Included is a brief discussion about HB 2 and HB 647 impacts. I believe that by Friday sometime, we will be able to provide a more detailed look at facts and impacts for school districts. I will get this to all or our MASS Board and MASS members when it is complete, so that you can continue to move forward with establishing budgets, etc for the ensuing school year.

I'm copying this message to the entire MASS Board so that our officers, and region presidents are informed about the legislative reporting.

Best to all of you on this election day. Wishing you success on levies, bond issues, and trustee elections!

Kirk