

Hi SAMLN17 Members!

Click [SAM Bills Still Active](#) to review the bills SAM is tracking that are still alive. You can follow the bills that are SAM advocacy priorities by clicking on the priority area ...

- [SAM School Funding Bills](#)
- [SAM Privatization with Public Fund Bills](#)
- [SAM Recruitment & Retention Bills](#)
- [SAM Special Ed Funding Bills](#)
- [SAM Facility and Technology Infrastructure Bills](#)

You are also able to see the bills that have successfully made through the session and signed by the governor, just click [SAM Bills Signed by Governor](#). All references to past info and what lies ahead, can be found on the [SAM Legislative Network 2017](#) webpage.

Highlights of Week 12 (Mar 20-24)

Click [SAMLN17 Schedule Week 12 Mar 20-24 Revised 3-24-17](#) to review the schedule of hearings that took place. This schedule changed multiple times as the week progressed. Pat and I provided testimony on 13 bills during the week, all related to the SAM advocacy priorities. SAMLN17 received a [CALL TO ACTION](#) on HB 2, HB 390, and HB 376 on Monday. Thanks to all who contacted legislators RE this CALL. The race to get appropriation/revenue bills to meet transmittal date of March 31 is causing rapid change to the bills being heard in Committees. Here is brief update on key bills from the perspective of SAM and our partners in MT-PEC (to give you a broad view of the week) ...

Monday, 3/20/17

- [SB139](#) Revise k-12 school district expansion laws (H) Education; 3:00 PM, Rm 137
- [HB298](#) Emphasize sexual abuse awareness and prevention in elementary schools (S) Education and Cultural Resources; 3:00 PM, Rm 422

Get Ready For Monday, March 27, Senate Education, 3:00 pm, Rm 303

- [HB376](#) Establish public charter schools (S) Education and Cultural Resources

[HB 563 - Kelker](#) - is set for hearing in the House Education Committee today. This is the Governor's plan for a preschool grant program that is consistent with a resolution passed by the K-12 Vision Group and supported by SAM. Elementary school districts are eligible to receive an annual grant of \$3,000 per preschool pupil enrolled in a preschool program under the bill.

[SB 115 - Moore](#) – is set for second reading in the House today. This bill revises stipends for national board certified teachers by providing a state stipend that can increase up to \$1500 or \$2500 per year with a local district match. National Board Certification and rewarding those who have attained it has been identified as an effective recruitment and retention tool for quality educators for school districts.

Tuesday, 3/21/17

[HB 390 - D. Jones](#) - will be heard today House Appropriations Committee. The bill currently contains a provision to have \$1 million statutorily appropriated for providing funds for schools to use as state matching funds for special construction under the federal E-rate broadband program. This helps promote one SAM's action priorities to work toward affordable access to broadband.

[SB 103 - L. Jones](#) – is set for second reading in the House today. The bill seeks to ensure that proficiency-based learning can work not only individually but at the system level. The bill removes penalties in current law for failure to meet the minimum hours of aggregate instruction for pupils who are proficient.

[HB 134 - Essmann](#) – is set for second reading in the House today. The bill, as amended, focuses on debt service payments to school districts. The sponsor developed the bill during the School Funding Interim Commission.

[SB 115 - Moore](#) – is set for third reading in the House today. The bill passed second reading 71-29. The bill provides for stipends for National Board Certified teachers and an additional amount for those who teach in critical shortage areas.

Wednesday, 3/22/17

The most important thing about to happen is [HB2 Section E](#) will be heard this morning, 3/22, 8:00 am in Senate Finance and Claims. Although the committee will only take testimony, it marks the beginning of the work on HB2 in the Senate. It is expected that the major work on the state budget for K12 education will take place in the Senate and should happen in the next couple of weeks.

Today [SB115](#) Revising stipends for national board certified teachers barely passed 3rd reading (50-49) in the House. Looks like this bill will make it to the finish line.

Wednesday, March 22

- [SB124](#) Extend school district bond term (H) Education; 3:00 PM, Rm 137
- [SB135](#) Generally revise laws related to first aid training in schools (H) Education; 3:00 PM, Rm 137
- [HB401](#) Revise local gov't and school district campaign reporting laws (S) State Administration; 3:00 PM, Rm 335
- [HB514](#) Rename school commemoration of Columbus Day to Montana Heritage Day (S) State Administration; 3:00 PM, Rm 335

Yesterday, 3/21 the following bills passed 2nd reading in the House and are up for 3rd ready today:

- [SB103](#) Clarify education laws related to minimum aggregate hours and proficiency
- [SB121](#) Provide that volunteer positions are not reportable to TRS

Yesterday in the Senate, HB248 passed 2nd ready and is up for 3rd reading today.

Today

- [HB2 Section E](#), Senate Finance and Claims, 8:00 am

House Education, 3:00 pm

- [SB124](#) Extend school district bond term
- [SB135](#) Generally revise laws related to first aid training in schools

Senate State Administration, 3:00 pm

- [HB401](#) Revise local gov't and school district campaign reporting laws
- [HB514](#) Rename school commemoration of Columbus Day to Montana Heritage Day

Other news

Last week [HB335](#) Revise laws related to school district transportation, was tabled in Senate Transportation; [HB418](#) Revise funding for career and vocational/technical education, was tabled in House Appropriations; and [SB234](#) Expedite teacher licensure for military spouses, was tabled in House Education.

It appears that [SB206](#) Provide for Montana standard time will not get out of House State Administration.

[HB 2 - Balance](#) - Section E - Education will be heard by the Senate Finance & Claims Committee this morning. There are still pieces missing pieces from the K-12 budget that include funding of special education and of the MT Digital Academy.

[SB 124 - McClafferty](#) - will be heard today in the House Education Committee. This bill extends the term of a school district bond as needed by a district, from 20 years to 30 years. The bill comes from discussions during the School Funding Interim Commission and the reality that bond elections will remain a major source of funding for new and major construction.

[HB 401 - Skees](#) - will be heard in the Senate State Administration Committee. As originally drafted, the bill would require all school district trustee candidates to file a petition of candidacy with the Office of Political Practices, name a campaign treasurer, and open a bank account. There have been some successful attempts to amend the bill, but further amendments are needed in the Senate.

[SB 115 - Moore](#) – passed third reading in the House on Tuesday, March 21, 50-49, after passing second reading 71-29. There is a possibility that there will be a move to reconsider the vote so emails to House Members are important. The bill provides for stipends for National Board Certified teachers and an additional amount for those who teach in critical shortage areas.

[SB 103 - Jones](#) – is set for third reading in the House today. After extensive floor debate – with some wrongly portraying the intent of the bill, it passed 94-6. The bill seeks to ensure that proficiency-based learning can work not only individually but at the system level. The bill removes penalties in current law for failure to meet the minimum hours of aggregate instruction for pupils who are proficient.

[HB 134 - Essmann](#) – is set for third reading in the House today after approval on second reading, 99-0. The bill, as amended, focuses on debt service payments to school districts. The sponsor developed the original bill during the School Funding Interim Commission.

Thursday, 3/23/17

[SB 143 - Lang](#) - is set for second reading in the House today. In its current form, the bill allows a school district or education entity to employ a retired TRS employee with 30 years of service who has been retired for at least 2 months for up to four years if the employer can document a shortage of applicants.

[HB 30 - Essmann](#) – is set for second reading in the House today. The bill exempts levies voted on after the adoption of a tax increment financing district.

[HB 396 - Grubbs](#) - is set for second reading in the House today. The bill requires either a TIF District or a Targeted Economic Development District (TEDD) to consult with local taxing jurisdictions, including school districts.

[SB 297 - Hinkle](#) – will be heard today in the House State Administration Committee. The bill would allow a non-resident landowner to vote in school district bond and mill levy elections. MTSBA opposes this bill as unconstitutional because it violates registration and residency requirements.

See this morning's message from [MTSBA Executive Director Lance Melton regarding possible amendments to SB 307](#). The possible amendments should NOT change any advice previously provided on SB 307.

House Education

- [HB66](#) Revise school funding related to facilities was tabled
- [HB265](#) Create a school suicide prevention competitive grant program passed, heavily amended
- [HB423](#) Create special needs education savings accounts was on the board for Executive Action but it lacked a fiscal note so action was deferred
- [HB563](#) Establishing Montana preschool grant program was tabled
- [SB135](#) Generally revise laws related to first aid training in schools was concurred in
- [SB139](#) Revise k-12 school district expansion law passed

Senate Education

- [HB37](#) Revise MT Indian language preservation program was concurred in
- [HB298](#) Emphasize sexual abuse awareness and prevention in elementary schools was concurred in
- [HB381](#) Require school districts to address suicide prevention and response concurred in
- [SR32](#) Confirm Governor's appointees to the Board of Public Education was adopted

Other Action

- [HB119](#) Revise quality educator loan assistance program was signed by the Governor
- [HB248](#) Revise anti-bullying laws returned to House with amendments made on Senate side
- [HB390](#) Generally revise school funding laws passed in House Appropriations

- [SB241](#) Generally revise commercial drivers license laws was concurred in, House Transportation

This Morning

- [SB206](#) Provide for Montana standard time was tabled in House State Administration

Friday, 3/24/17

House Education, 3:00 pm, Rm 137

- [SB226](#) Generally revise summer school bus transportation
- [SB227](#) Revise state school transportation reimbursement
- [SB242](#) Encourage high schools to administer civics test

[HB 355 - Shaw](#) – was taken from the table, amended back to its original form of a \$.50 per mile reimbursement, and then passed on a vote of 9-1 from the Senate Highways and Transportation Committee. The bill provides for a new definition of a bus to include a vehicle to transport 10 or fewer passengers. The bill now heads to the Senate floor and will be carried by Sen. Buttrey, who led the effort to get the bill out of Committee.

[SB 143 - Lang](#) - is set for third reading in the House today after passing second reading 61-39. The bill allows a school district or education entity to employ a retired TRS employee with 30 years of service who has been retired for at least two months for up to four years if the employer can document a shortage of applicants.

[HB 390 - Jones](#) - is set for third reading in the House today after passing second reading. The bill currently contains a provision to have \$1 million statutorily appropriated for providing funds for schools to use as state matching funds for special construction under the federal E-rate Broadband program. This helps promote one of SAM's action advocacy priorities to work toward affordable access to broadband.

[HB 645 - Cuffe](#) - will be heard today in the House Appropriations Committee. This bill includes \$15 million for Quality Schools grants. The bill relies on state bonding and therefore needs to have a two-thirds vote of each house, which is unlikely without additional compromise.

[HB 14 - Keane](#) - will be heard today in the House Appropriations Committee. The bill is the original bonding program bill that contains \$5.4 million in Quality Schools grants but also calls for transfers out of the School Facility and Technology Fund.

[HB 647 - Jones](#) - will be heard today in the House Appropriations Committee. The bill contains an elimination of the natural resource development payment, the data for achievement payment, and revises excess oil and gas payments.

[SB 226](#) and [SB 227](#) - Cohenour - will be heard today in the House Education Committee. SB 226 would allow for bus transportation for academic summer school although the state reimbursement was amended out of the bill. SB 227 aligns the definition of the school year, which is based on aggregate hours of instruction, with transportation statutes, which currently have a limitation of 180 days.

[SB 367 - Moore](#) - will be heard today in Senate Finance and Claims Committee. The bill is another infrastructure bill, and it provides up to \$30 million in Quality Schools grants.

Upcoming Week 13 (Mar 27-31)

The schedule for hearings is changing so rapidly that I intend to wait until Sunday, March 26 to prepare the schedule for the week so that bills can be assigned to Committees. This will be updated on the [SAM Legislative Network 2017](#) webpage. Rapid action to get bills transmitted by the March 31 deadline will mean that this next week will hold many hearings. We will keep you posted on the [SAM Legislative Network 2017](#) webpage.

General Information

Please use the SAM website (www.sammt.org) as a resource for all things legislative under 'Announcements', then '[2017 Legislative Session](#)'. All information for the SAMLN17 is posted under '[SAM Legislative Network 2017](#)' on the webpage – including this first SAMLN Update.

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 tracked by SAM can be found on the [SAM Bills 2017](#) webpage under [SAM General Bills](#).

[Contact a Legislator](#) site is on the [Legislative Session](#) webpage. You can use the [Online Message Form](#).

You may also watch or listen to [Live & Upcoming](#) meeting and hearings. Just click on the meeting or hearing that is on the schedule.

There has been much discussion on when and how it is allowable to advocate as a SAM member and school district employee, please read [SAMLN17 Rules of Conduct for Political Activity and Advocacy](#) to understand this.

Before giving testimony on a bill, please view [SAM "How To" Video - Providing Testimony at a Legislative Hearing](#).

Each of the links in this Update are on the [SAM Legislative Network 2017](#) website. Contact us if you have questions. We hope this background is helpful to you as you share information with your colleagues in your area!

Kirk and Pat