

Hi SAMLN17 Members!

## Highlights of Week 15 (April 10-14)

Week 15 was filled with House and Senate floor action on bills SAM has been tracking throughout the session. Click [SAM Bills Status by Priority Report 4-8-17](#) to see an update on all 104 bills tracked by SAM by Priority or click [SAM General Bills Still Active](#) to see real time updated status. Click [SAMLN17 Schedule Week 15 Apr 10-14 revised 4-11-17](#) to see the schedule of hearings and changes that occurred during the week.

### **Update on Bills of Interest ...**

[HB 2](#) (General Appropriations Act), passed the Senate with some amendments, keeping in place the funding of the Data for Achievement payment, Special Ed funding, Montana Digital Academy funding and the increased enrollment funding. HB 2 has been returned to the House with amendments. The companion bill to HB2 is [HB 647](#) (Generally revise education funding, implement general appropriations bill), passed the Senate [39-7](#) and is returned to the House with amendments. See the Comments about these bills for next week below.

[SB 307](#) (Revise K-12 school funding laws to address facilities), has passed the legislature, is enrolled and on the Governor's desk for signature.

[HB 134](#) (Revise school funding related to facilities), passed in Senate Ed and then was rereferred to Senate Finance and Claims. The bill as cancelled indefinitely due to the passage of SB 307.

## Upcoming Week 16 (April 17-21)

Committee hearings are complete so there is no schedule to share.

The Legislature is winding down, but there are still key issues to be resolved and several bills in play. Rumors are that they could adjourn by Friday, April 21 or maybe Monday, April 24.

### **Here are some things, as outlined by our MT-PEC partners that we believe must be done before adjournment...**

[HB 2](#) – this is the general appropriations act that fund most of state government. The bill has been returned to the House with Senate amendments. Typically, the House would reject the Senate amendments and they would go into a conference committee to iron out differences. This session, however, they have made some adjustments in the budget in other bills which seems to indicate that the House will concur in the Senate amendments and the budget bill will be done.

[HB 647](#) (Rep. Jones) – this bill implements section E of HB 2 and contains major policy decisions impacting the budget for K-12, including the NRD payment, GTB, block grants, and oil & gas revenue distribution. The bill is back in the House with Senate amendments.

### **Things that we and others would like to see done before adjournment...**

[HB 390](#) (Rep. Don Jones) – the bill passed second and third reading as amended on the Senate floor, 50-0. Sen. Llew Jones carried the bill in the Senate, where another amendment was added to the bill; the bill now goes back to the House for a vote to concur in the Senate amendments; the bill currently contains a provision to have \$1 million statutorily appropriated each year for providing funds for schools to use as state matching funds for special construction under the federal E-rate broadband program. This bill is a key advocacy priority for SAM to work toward affordable access to broadband.

[SB 367](#) (Sen. Moore) – this bill is one of remaining infrastructure bills that uses state bonding to fund projects, including 50 Quality Schools grants with up to \$30 million in funding. The level of funding is subject to change and the provisions of this bill could be amended, in whole or in part, into another bill. Finding agreement on an infrastructure and bonding bill is one of the biggest challenges remaining in the session. There are a number of bills that are in the mix in trying to find a solution that can pass the Senate, the House, and the Governor's desk.

[SB 124](#) (Sen. McClafferty) -- the bill would raise the bonding term from 20 to 30 years; it was tabled in House Education, but on Monday the bill was taken off the table, amended, and unanimously passed; the bill now goes to second reading in the House on Tuesday, April 18. The amendment will put some sideboards on the bill, but still allow for going to a 30 year term.

[SB 143](#) (Sen. Lang) -- the Conference Committee report is now waiting consideration by the House; the Conference Committee report was approved on third reading, 34-16, it had passed second reading, 36-14; the bill amends the HB 363 program (2009) where a district can employ a retired TRS employee who has been retired for at least 2 months by reducing the years of TRS service requirement from 30 to 25. The bill was amended in the House State Administration Committee by moving the years of service requirement back to 30 years, restoring the program being available to all districts, and adding a provision for OPI and other agencies. The bill, as amended by the House received a do not concur vote in the Senate which led to the appointment of a conference committee. The Conference Committee report includes a provision for retirees prior to July 1, 2017 need only have 27 years of creditable service but after that date, retirees will continue to need 30 years of service for re-employment.

### **Other bills still in the process...**

[HB 118](#) (Windy Boy) – the bill is up for second reading in the House on Tuesday, April 18 to concur in the Senate amendments; the bill revises the state suicide prevention program and provides grants to groups, including schools, for suicide prevention programs; there is funding through DPHHS for the Native Youth Suicide Reduction Plan and for school-based suicide prevention efforts (\$250,000 for each of these).

[SB 241](#) (Sen. Buttrey) – the bill revises commercial drivers license laws by providing third-party CDL testing aimed at speeding up the process for an individual trying to obtain a CDL. The bill potentially will help address the shortage of bus drivers in school districts.

## General Information

Click [SAM General 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](#)

Please use the SAM website ([www.sammmt.org](http://www.sammmt.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. 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*