

Hi SAMLN17 Members!

## Highlights of Week 16 (April 17-21)

Week 16 started slow and ended with the most bizarre twist of the session thus far. A non-posted Senate session at 9:30 AM Thursday morning led to [HB 376](#) being blasted back to life with a vote of [26-24](#) (the narrowest of margins). The Senate then recessed until 1:00 PM where they came back into session with HB 376 listed to be heard on 2nd reading. This led to the Call to Action that I sent to you at about 12:30 PM Thursday, 4/20. The Senate delayed the vote on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading three times (twice during the 1:00 PM floor session, once during the 4:00 PM floor session) and never marked up the bill on 2<sup>nd</sup> reading on Friday, 4/21, for either the 9:30 AM or 1:00 PM floor session. The Senate has adjourned for the weekend to reconvene at 10:00 AM on Monday.

Our interpretation of all of this is that the leadership knew, as a result of your work on the Call to Action, that they did not have the votes to pass HB 376, so they continued to postpone it. A bipartisan amendment is in the works that may have MT-PEC support because it would strike the language of the current bill and insert language very similar to the Charter school administrative rule for Montana – [10.55.604](#) (see subsection (11)). Now it may be on the Senate Agenda Monday, April 24. Until then, **we request the SAMLN17 continue to contact Senators to request their NO vote on HB 376 as currently written.**

Click [SAM Bills Status by Priority Report 4-21-17](#) to see an update on all 105 bills tracked by SAM by Priority or click [SAM General Bills Still Active](#) to see real time updated status. Click [SAMLN17 Schedule Week 16 Apr 17-21 revised 4-20-17](#) 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 was returned to the House with amendments and passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading [58-41](#) today 4/21 and is on its way to the Governor's desk!

The companion bill to HB2 is [HB 647](#) (Generally revise education funding, implement general appropriations bill), passed the Senate and was returned to the House with amendments. 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. Today, 4/21, HB 647 passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading in the House [91-9](#) and is on its way to the Governor's desk!

[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 with a hearing on Wednesday, 4/20, and passed 3<sup>rd</sup> reading in the Senate today, 4/21, 50-0. The bill is now returned to the House with amendments.

[HB 390](#) (Generally revise school funding laws), 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 (a SAM advocacy priority) passed the House today, 4/21, [98-2](#) and is on its way to the Governor's desk.

[SB 124](#) (Extend school district bond term), allows school districts who may qualify for bond assistance from programs like USDA to be able to extend the term of their bonds to 30 years – with the current limit at 20 years. The Senate suspended the rules to allow SB 124 to be considered and passed the bill on second and third reading. The bill will now head to the Governor.

[SB 143](#) (Revise retiree return to work provisions in the teachers' retirement system) -- the Conference Committee report was considered and passed by the House today, 4/21. The bill is headed to the Governor's desk. The Conference Committee report included 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.

## Upcoming Week 17 (April 24-29)

No Committee hearings are scheduled.

The Legislature is winding down, but there are still key issues to be resolved and several bills in play. All rumors are off about ending early. Saturday, April 29 would be the 90<sup>th</sup> day of the session!

### **Infrastructure is one item that we believe must be done before adjournment...**

[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.

[HB 376](#) (Public charter schools), must be decided now that it has been blasted back into action. See the discussion on page 1 for the comments about a potential amendment and action for this week.

## 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.sammt.org](http://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. 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*