

Hi SAMLN17 Members!

The session now has 2571 bill draft request under consideration. SAM is tracking 288 bill drafts (94 are bills and 194 drafts). Click [SAM General Bills](#) on the 2017 Legislative Session/SAM Bills 2017 webpage to review all of the bills and drafts and to see the stance of SAM (Proponent, Opponent, or Monitor) being taken on the bills that will be heard in Committees in the past and this coming week. The SAMLN17 now has over 85 members! Click [HERE](#) to see your colleagues who have joined SAMLN17. At this point in the Session we (Pat and I) have provided testimony on 24 bills that are progressing through the process.

## Highlights of Week 5 (Jan 30-Feb 3)

Click [HERE](#) to see SAMLN17 Schedule for Week 5 updated on 1/31/17. Note this schedule was modified during the week as hearings were added. This Schedule is also posted on the SAM website under '[SAM Legislative Network 2017](#)'.

[HB 274](#) (Allow ANB funding for students w/ disabilities up to age 22) was heard in (H) Education last Monday with several proponents lined up to testify. SAM proponent testimony pointed out the fiscal note of the bill estimating 38 students statewide with state allocation of only \$304,902 which we feel would not include all students who would qualify for services between ages 19-22 - we were strategic in our delivery of testimony to point this out. We also assisted Rep. Kelker with the language in the bill that would identify which 19-22 year old students would be eligible. More to come on this one.

[SB 5](#) (Revise INTERCAP loan program) came out of the House Floor vote on Monday afternoon with a passage on 3<sup>rd</sup> reading, 91-8. It is headed to the Governor's desk for signature. This bill provides specific funding flexibility for schools. This is an early victory!

[HB 191](#) (Provide inflationary increase for ANB funding) received a set-back where it was amended then passed out of (S) Education on Wednesday. The percentages of inflation were changed to reflect the following: From 1.37% to .50% FY18 and from 1.00% to 1.87% in FY19. The reduction in FY18 results in less being funded in FY19 despite the increased percentage for that year. This change will basically result in about a \$6.7 million loss of state funding for inflation in the 2019 biennium. We (MT-PEC partners) are working with the legislative committee leadership in helping to develop solutions that cause minimum budget authority loss while retaining all parts of the funding formula being included in the inflationary increase.

[SB 143](#) (Revise retiree return to work provisions in the teachers' retirement system) would give more flexibility to schools in hiring retirees for hard to hire positions. It allows the availability of a retiree to qualify for that at 25 years as opposed to 30. It also extends the availability of that retiree to work 4 years instead of 3. SAM stood as a proponent to this bill in relation to a SAM Recruitment and Retention resolution from Delegate Assembly.

[HB 270](#) (Generally revise funding for K-12 career technical education) provides funding for CTE programs basically replacing the funding provided for the 2017 biennium. SAM stood in support of this bill with clear testimony referencing the SAM CTE resolutions formed approved by our membership. With testimony, we were direct in stating that this bill cannot dilute the proposed \$2 million target for HS CTE programs for the 2019 biennium by including grades 6-8. On the other hand, in line with resolution, we proposed that additional funding placed on top of the \$2 million should be a priority to establish funding support for 6-8 CTE programs and keep the \$2 million intact for HS CTE programs.

SAM provided Proponent testimony on [HB 119](#) (Revise quality educator loan assistance program) and for [HB 116](#) (Increase funding for gifted and talented education). [SB 115](#) (Revising stipends for national board certified teachers) was heard in the Senate Finance and Claims Committee on Tuesday and we were proponents.

Other bills that had hearings this week, but have not had a vote in Committee are:

- [SB 139](#) - Revise k-12 school district expansion laws

## Upcoming Week 6 (Feb 6-10)

Click [HERE](#) to review the SAMLN17 Legislative Schedule for the coming week!

Monday Committee meetings will hear the following bills and we will provide Proponent testimony

- [HJ 1](#) (Request study of funding for education programs for special needs students) in (S) Ed. The bill passed the House [77-22](#) on 1/30/17.
- [HB 253](#) (Inflationary increase for special education allowable cost payment) in (H) Ed. **This is a SAM Action priority bill**, providing inflation on the special ed component of the school funding formula by putting it in the formula.
- [HB 355](#) (Revise laws related to school district transportation) in (H) Transportation. The bill calls for flexibility in student transportation by allowing a vehicle other than a school bus to carry 10 or fewer passengers as a bus used on a route to transport students to and from school.

Other bills to watch this week

- [HB 134](#) (Revise school funding related to facilities) on Wednesday in (H)Ed. This is a School Funding Interim Commission bill addressing school facilities which is a SAM priority. We believe a final blended version of this bill and [HB 66](#) will result a new bill that will be the actual potential headway for school facilities in the 2017 session.
- [HB 323](#) (Authorize emergency use of opioid antagonist in a school setting). Please read the details of this bill. We will monitor it's progress but are concerned about requiring additional responsibilities of schools in a medical situation.

[LC2266](#) (Creates special education savings accounts) is a draft bill that SAM is watching closely as it emerges. It does look like this bill mimics HB 322 of the 2015 session. This would be one of a couple of bills for privatization with public funding that we have seen at this point. Many significant Constitutional issues and added reporting requirements for schools in this bill. The other bill that just got introduced yesterday is [HB 376](#) (Establish public charter schools); this might be considered a legitimate bill under MCA rule but one significant problem – it circumvents the Board of Public Education.

Much more happening with executive action on bills heard in committee and floor action on bills that are moving in the session. We will be reporting changes in the SAMLN17 Legislative Schedule as they occur.

## General Information

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 – 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*