



Hybrid Meetings Begin

The Senate held their first hybrid committee hearings this week. This is the first time this session in which multiple Senators were in the same room for a hearing. While the Senate is moving to this hybrid model, legislators, lobbyists and the public will continue to have a virtual option to participate in the committee hearing process. The House continues to reiterate its intention to remain completely virtual.

Revenue Update

Things continue to look *slightly* up regarding economic recovery of Minnesota. Again, for January, general fund revenues were up from what was anticipated. General fund revenues totaled 14.1 percent more (\$296 million) than projected. The full February Budget and Economic Forecast will be released later this month. This report will be what is considered most accurate for purposes of balancing the state's budget.

Committee updates

House Education Finance Committee: This week the committee heard two bills of interest. The first, [HF843](#), proposes to increase the per-pupil formula allowance by two percent per year and links future increases to the rate of inflation. Testimony was provided by Shakopee school district superintendent Mike Redmond, Osseo Area Schools Director of Finance Ron Meyer, and Elk River school board member Tara Weis.

The second bill, [HF292](#), proposes to allow school districts the authority to renew expiring referendums by school board action. Testimony was provided by Owatonna school district superintendent Jeffrey Elstad, Mounds View superintendent Chris Lennox and Robbinsdale school board member John Vento.

Both bills were laid over to be considered when the committee assembles the education finance budget bill later in session.

Senate Education Finance and Policy Committee: This week the committee heard [SF2](#) which proposes to eliminate the authority for the governor to use peacetime emergency authority to impose restrictions on schools. Testimony raising concerns was provided by MASA executive director, Deb Henton, who also shared that this position reflected concerns by MSBA and AMSD. The bill passed and the full Senate is expected to vote on the bill early next week.

The committee also heard [SF380](#), which mandates that school districts publish a summary of consulting fees for professional services, consistent with the uniform financial accounting and reporting standards. Tina Burkholder, Director of Business Services in Monticello, testified and raised concerns about the implications of this legislation. This bill was laid over to be considered when the committee assembles the education finance budget bill later in session.

House Education Policy Committee: This week, the committee heard two bills focused on labor relations. The first bill, [HF505](#), proposes to bring ECFE and ABE teachers within the definition of “teacher” under the continuing contract and tenure statutes. This bill was laid over to be considered when the committee assembles the education policy bill later in session.

[HF603](#), proposes to make changes to the Public Employment Labor Relations Act (PELRA) to extend the requirements of the act to part-time employees, and add things such as class size, assessment decisions, and student-staff ratios as provisions under the terms and condition of employment. The bill passed the committee and was sent to the House Labor Committee. The Senate is unlikely to act this bill. Testimony raising concerns was provided by MASA executive director, Deb Henton, who also shared that this position reflected concerns by other education organizations.

House and Senate Tax Committees: This week, both the House and Senate tax committees heard a [bill](#) to exempt school districts from sales tax attributable to fundraising sales for extracurricular activities. The bill was laid over for consideration when the respective committees assemble its omnibus tax bills.

House Property Tax Division: This week, the committee heard [legislation](#) by Rep. Paul Marquart, the Chair of the House Tax Committee, which proposes to establish a citizens’ property tax advisory committee to provide input prior to the certification of proposed property tax levies. The bill also proposes to add a supplemental budget document to the notice of proposed property taxes and replaces the public Truth-in-Taxation hearing with a meeting known as Minnesota Property Taxpayer’s Day. With feedback provided by MASBO, MSBA testified with concerns about the complexity of the bill and challenges raised regarding timing of the necessary documentation. The bill was laid over for consideration when the committee assembles its omnibus tax bill.

MDE Policy bill and Governor’s budget bills introduced this week

This week, the Governor’s budget bills and the MDE policy bill were introduced. At some point in the next few weeks, the respective committees in the House or Senate will likely hold hearings but nothing is scheduled at this point.

[SF960/HF1065](#) (Chamberlain/Davnie): A bill for an act relating to education finance; providing funding for prekindergartens through grade 12 education; modifying provisions for general education, education excellence, teachers, special education, facilities, nutrition and libraries, early childhood, community education, and state agencies; requiring reports; appropriating money. **Governor’s E-12 budget recommendations.**

[SF973/HF1064](#) (Chamberlain/Davnie): A bill for an act relating to education finance; appropriating money for summer education programs. **Governor’s budget recommendations for summer programming.**

[SF788/HF950](#) (Chamberlain/Richardson): A bill for an act relating to education; modifying provisions for prekindergarten through grade 12 including general education; education excellence; inclusive and welcoming schools; health and well-being; teachers; charter schools; nutrition and libraries; early childhood; post-secondary enrollment options and graduation; making technical corrections; requiring. **MDE Policy Bill.**

Talking points for the week

Please share with MASA and your legislative delegation what the items below mean to your school district:

- 2% per year formula increase tied to inflation;
- Board approval of levy renewals; and
- Thoughts and/or concerns about the Governor's budget recommendations with MASA and your legislative delegation.

Bill introductions

[SF710](#): (Duckworth): A bill for an act relating to education; extending school district fund transfer flexibility; expanding uses of long-term facilities maintenance revenue.

[SF750](#) (Draheim): A bill for an act relating to education; requiring an online personal finance class for high school graduation.

[SF783](#) (Chamberlain): A bill for an act relating to education; modifying the responsibilities of the community education advisory council; modifying the calculation and allowable uses of general community education revenue; appropriating money.

[SF784](#) (Chamberlain): A bill for an act relating to education; requiring school districts to establish teacher mentoring programs; modifying allowed uses of staff development revenue.

[SF789](#) (Rosen): A bill for an act relating to education; expanding definition of shared time pupils.

[SF819](#) (Dornink): A bill for an act relating to education; creating a pilot for short-call substitute teachers.

[HF799](#) (Theis): A bill for an act relating to education; providing for school start times.

[HF843](#) (Stephenson): A bill for an act relating to education finance; increasing the general education basic formula allowance by two percent per year; linking future increases in the basic formula allowance to the rate of inflation.

[HF859](#) (Kotzya-Witthuhn): A bill for an act relating to education; requiring schools to make disposable menstrual products freely available in school restrooms.

[HF917](#) (Sandstede): A bill for an act relating to education finance; updating the transportation sparsity revenue percent.

[HF945](#) (Youakim): A bill for an act relating to education; modifying third-party reimbursement for social work services for special education.

[HF951](#) (Richardson): A bill for an act relating to education; prohibiting dismissals of students in kindergarten through grade 3.

[HF965](#) (Edelson): A bill for an act relating to education; requiring special education recovery services and support plans for students with disabilities; appropriating money.

[HF967](#) (Edelson): A bill for an act relating to education; modifying capacity provisions for certain special education programs.