

January 25, 2014

The Friday morning House Education Committee Hearing scheduled to hear the public school budget bill, House Bill 3, was canceled. House Bill 3 will be on the committee's agenda on Monday morning at 8:00 AM. However, the Committee will still hold open hearings to hear from education stakeholders on the next two Saturdays in the House Chambers. These hearings will be Saturday, January 25, 2014 and Saturday, February 1, 2014, from 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Most legislative business has adjourned for the weekend, except for the House Education Committee hearing on Saturday. However, Monday will be a big day at the Committee because State Auditor Hector Balderas will present an update on his audit of the Public Education Department's (PED) efforts to gain a waiver from the U.S. Department of Education (USED) on Maintenance of Effort (MOE) requirements for special education funding. The legislature's special education funding for several years did not meet federal requirements to maintain level special education funding in return for taking federal money. The PED did not tell legislators or the public about this problem until late in last year's legislative session. Many believe that the PED has been less than honest about the state of its request that the USED "waive" the requirements and continue all federal funding. Stay tuned, fireworks possible!

After the Auditor, if there is time, the Committee will debate House Bill 3.

[Follow this link for information on the bill.](#)

Please Take Note of Our Priorities for this Legislative Session

- Sufficient Funding Must be Provided:
 - No less than fifty percent (50%) of all new revenue should be dedicated to K-12 public education, through the State Equalization Guarantee. This provides for appropriate decision-making by local elected School Boards directly accountable to the public.
 - Since 2008 and the beginning of the national "recession," Public Education funding has been drastically cut, causing severe harm to students and employees alike.
 - The legislature must meet the Constitutional guarantee to provide all students in the state with a free and fair public education. (Article XII, Section 1: Free Public Schools: A uniform system of free public schools sufficient" to educate New Mexico students).
 - Maintain the limited distribution (5.8%) from the permanent school fund through a constitutional amendment (Rep. J. Trujillo, HJR 3 LAND GRANT FUND FOR EDUCATION REFORMS).
- Return Public Schools to the Voters.
 - We support a constitutional amendment to place the authority currently placed in the Appointed Secretary of Education in an elected State Board of Education, and a Superintendent of Public Instruction hired by that Board, who must be a New Mexico licensed qualified professional educator (Sen. M. Padilla, SJR 2BOARD & SUPERINTENDENT OF EDUCATION)
- Competitive School Employee Pay.
 - In order to attract and retain the most qualified public school employees, the legislature and governor should raise teachers' salaries equal to national averages for teachers.
 - A School employee pay raise of not less than three percent (3%) must be a priority of the legislature via sufficient appropriations to local school districts through the public school funding formula. (HB 3 Rep. M. Stewart for House Education Committee).
 - Local decision making, including collective bargaining, must determine local salary systems. (HB 3 and LFC Recommendation).
 - We need to make sure all teachers are paid a competitive salary before giving only a small group of teachers a bonus. We oppose any arbitrary so-called merit pay schemes based on subjective criteria. (HB 3 Rep. M. Stewart for House Education Committee).
 - Escalating health insurance premiums and retirement contributions and/or benefit decreases have decreased overall compensation of education employees.
- Public Schools Are Not For Profit: Resist Privatization.
 - The legislature must continue to resist schemes to privatize the education of any public school students. We oppose any attempts to use public funds for private school vouchers, tuition tax credits for attendance at a private school, home school, or for-profit management of public schools.
- Teacher Evaluations Should be Fair and Helpful.
 - Teacher evaluations should be conducted by trained and certified administrators based upon proven methods such as teacher observations, not students test scores.

[Follow this link for a comparison of the budget proposals currently being considered.](#)