

Legislative Update #13

Budget

[House Bill 2, the General Appropriations Act](#), is now in the [Senate Finance Committee](#). Democrats in the House tried unsuccessfully to amend the budget and increase funding for public schools and deny funding for the Governor's merit pay plan. They fell short on party-line votes. The final vote on the budget is at [this link](#). Most democrats opposed the budget bill on the final vote, but a few voted for the package.

The final budget as passed by the House is essentially flat with a .9% increase in the public school funding formula funds. The only real increases from last year are to pay for fixed costs and a new base salary for level one teachers of \$34,000. The only other salary increases are a continuation of last year's merit pay pilot at \$9 million below the line, meaning it will not pass through the school funding formula; it will be doled out by the Public Education Department, based on applications by districts. It is not too early to ask the [Senate Finance Committee](#) to increase funding to public schools along the lines recommended by House Democrats and move the \$9 million above the line into the funding formula to provide at least a token salary increase to all employees, instead of merit pay for a few!

The [Senate Finance Committee](#) accepted proposed amendments to [House Bill 2](#) last week, then the committee will decide on its version of the Budget. That process could happen at any time. NEA-New Mexico is worked with [Senator Howie Morales](#) to craft an amendment to move the merit pay funds and some other money above the line to produce a token .8% salary increase for school employees. That amendment has been submitted to the [Senate Finance Committee](#). Thank [Senator Morales](#) for working to provide the salary increase. Call [Senate Finance Committee](#) members and ask them to support [Senator Morales'](#) amendment to stop the Governor's merit pay plan and provide at least a token salary increase.