

Capitol Insider

April 10, 2015

Regular Committees Finish Hearings

As regular hearings finished this week, I caution you that nothing is final until the last gavel falls on or about April 29th. Conference committees begin next week and bills will change even faster than they did this week.

Attacks on Superintendent's Role Continue

House Education chaired by Rep. Bob Behning heard Sen. Travis Holdman's SB 1 this week that could have provided for a real change in the State Board of Ed (SBOE) make up and unseat Supt. Ritz from the chair of that board. Instead, an amendment offered by Behning, expands the board by two more one-sided appointments and continues to effectively unseat the elected Superintendent. Holdman introduced the bill by saying that it was time to "put politics aside." Do you really believe that? If you believe this is a political move, please contact your REPRESENTATIVE to demand that he or she represent you and some 1.3 million voters. Even the Hoosiers who didn't vote for Ritz surely believe in the democracy of our election process. Stop the bullying at the Statehouse.

Committees Act Fast and Furiously

You received a message to email your legislators this week about SB 566 that had become SB 538 that then went back to mostly being SB 566 as HB 1009 was stripped and more of SB 566 was inserted in that, but as HB 1001 was released, a little more of SB 566 appeared in it, but HB 1638 moved forward with some changes.

Let me try to tell you where things stand, or where they stood at the end of the day yesterday.

SB 566 that had been introduced to provide the state the ability to stop using ISTEP and get a test that was shorter, provided teachers with information to better help students, and potentially cost the state less. Once it got to the House Ed Committee, it was stripped of the introduced language and union bashing bill 538 was inserted. That's when you were asked to contact legislators. Your calls and emails had some effect because the bill, having been sent to House Ways & Means, was drastically amended there to remove Sen. Yoder's union bashing language. The bill is in pretty good shape now. It does require the Attorney General to send a teacher "Bill of Rights" kind of letter each year to all teachers in Indiana.

Then the Governor's *Freedom to Teach* bill carried by Rep. Behning was stripped in Sen. Kenley's Appropriations Committee where he inserted most of his original 566 language – yes, back to maybe changing from ISTEP. Much good in 566 includes Performance Awards to go to all teachers including interlocals and co-ops, but the *downside is that it cannot be bargained*. Also included is pay for a master's degree earned after the previous September 2014 deadline that is in **(1) education; or (2) a content area directly related to an advance placement, dual credit, or other course taught by the teacher**. The *downside is that this increase in pay cannot be bargained*.

Then there is HB 1001, *a.k.a. The Budget Bill*. It's almost as if no other bills need to

pass once the budget bill moves. There are new school runs based on the Senate's version of the budget. I'll be sure presidents receive a link to that. We see some increases, but urban schools still take a hit for the most part. The voucher cap is removed. It appears the Education Roundtable is repealed or is at least unfunded, and oddly placed in the budget bill is language from the introduced version of 566 concerning performance evaluations. Here's what the bill says (as of today):

NEW section for IC 20-28-11.5-0.5

d) In developing a performance evaluation model, a school corporation shall consider the following:

- (1) Test scores of students (both formative and summative).**
- (2) Classroom presentation observations.**
- (3) Observation of student-teacher interaction.**
- (4) Knowledge of subject matter.**
- (5) Dedication and effectiveness of the teacher through time and effort on task.**
- (6) Contributions of teachers through group teacher interactivity in fulfilling the school improvement plan.**
- (7) Cooperation of the teacher with supervisors and peers.**
- (8) Extracurricular contributions of the teacher.**
- (9) Outside performance evaluations.**
- (10) Compliance with school corporation rules and procedures.**
- (11) Other items considered important by the school corporation in developing each student to the student's maximum intellectual potential and performance.**

The state board and the department may recommend additional factors, but may not require additional factors unless directed to do so by the general assembly.

I have to admit that I don't know what (9) means. I've asked and will keep asking. I do know I like that the general assembly remains in control.

For all the differences – philosophical differences as legislators characterize it – Sen. Kenley has done much good for public schools and teachers. We do have differences, especially when it comes to the union. We must recognize his leadership in this and other bills this year.

Working Together

There are many other legislators who have worked hard this year to try to stop the insanity. Rep. Vernon Smith, ranking minority member of House Ed, has been a ready source for those of us who lobby for public education; we've spent many hours working through bills and trying to write amendments or better yet kill awful bills. Rep. Terri Austin has been right there with him and us. I've gotten to know Rep. Behning. Being the eternal optimist, I believed we could influence him. I've been wrong before, but I won't give up. Rep. Thompson gave us a lot of time and language in HB 1483 – some of that has gotten lost along the way, but some has stayed. Sen. Pete Miller authored the massive SB 500 – I know the hours I put in to that one. I can't imagine how many he gave it. He met with me multiple times, shared his work, and finally got a bill that did what it was supposed to do by repealing outdated laws.

You know what happens when you start recognizing people for their good work. You're bound to leave out someone. I'm going to stop here, but know we work with a broad spectrum of legislators on both sides of the aisle.

As we move in to the final weeks of conference committees, all we can say is, "Stay Tuned."

IMPORTANT Convention Information

- Delegate sheets **MUST** be sent immediately to AFT Indiana. All Presidents received notice in the convention call that's required by constitution to be sent 90 days before convention.
- Delegate sheets are a **MUST**. If you have not sent yours, it's overdue. Besides getting your elected delegates listed, we need that for a meal count and for materials. **PLEASE** get that to Erin a.s.a.p.
- Also, remember the second annual **LIVE AUCTION**. Plan to donate items to be auctioned and bring your checkbook – cash works, too. All money raised at the auction goes to supporting candidates in state races who support public education and working families.

CALENDAR

Apr. 29 – Legislature must adjourn by statute; special sessions can be called

May 1-2 – AFT Indiana annual convention; Hammond, IN

****AFT Indiana is tentatively scheduling regional social media workshops for June – Gary and Anderson. Plan to send some members to learn about Facebook, Twitter, writing a letter to the editor, etc. Details in the planning stage. Learn and laugh with colleagues from around the state.*

Jun 22-26 – AFT Union Leadership Institute (Delavan, WI)

Jul 13-15 – AFT TEACH Conference (Washington, DC)

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