



SMAC PTA LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

April 13, 2021

The regular legislative session ended on Friday. In theory, that means no new legislation can be introduced. But that often isn't what happens in practice, so **we still need to pay attention.**

The legislature is now on a three-week recess while the bills passed by both chambers head to the governor's desk to be signed into law or vetoed. The legislature will then return on May 3 for the "veto session" where they can take another vote to attempt to override any vetoed bills.

Below is a list of bills that came before the legislature last week, along with some additional information about the budget. None of these bills passed with the threshold required for a veto override in both chambers, giving the governor the opportunity to veto each bill. She can also line-item veto parts of the budget. We'll be watching closely to see what happens next.

Legislative highlights from the week ending April 9

Last week, the legislature passed a budget, but it did not include funding for K-12 education. Leadership promises to address K-12 funding when legislators return in May.

We will be looking for the legislature to pass a clean education funding bill that FULLY FUNDS our public schools as required per the Gannon Supreme Court case and one that isn't tied to other legislative actions.

Throughout the session we have seen majorities in the legislature attempt to shirk the state's responsibility to fund public schools by using one-time federal funds intended for COVID expenses and attempts to greatly expand voucher systems that divert public tax dollars to private schools.

Below is a list of bills that came before the House and the Senate last week.

- **FAILED [CCR SB 175](#): Mega education bill that would fund schools per Gannon, but included a significant expansion of voucher type programs.** This bill (originally under HB2119) was expected to pass, but one legislator's surprise overnight vote switch from YES to NO caused it to fail.

Note, the bill description in the link for CCR SB 175 does not match the contents of the final bill. The original contents of bill SB 175 were stripped and bill HB2119 was added.

Concerns

This bill is one we've been watching all year. It is really good news that it didn't pass, but as mentioned in the bullet point above, **we need to make sure vouchers don't reappear during the budget process.**

- **PASSED [HB 2039](#): Requirement that students pass a civics exam (and a financial literacy course) to graduate.** There were a number of bills this session that were examples of legislative overreach and this was one of them.

Curriculum decisions are the responsibility of the Kansas Department of Education. KSDE has a better understanding of existing curriculum and the complexity of fitting in additional requirements to graduate. Additionally, the legislature didn't include any mandates for funding these new requirements.

- **PASSED [HB 2058](#): Conceal carry age reduced from 21 to 18.** This age reduction was amended into the conceal carry reciprocity bill that allows out-of-state individuals with licenses to carry in another state to conceal carry in Kansas, even if their home state has weaker gun laws than Kansas. A number of amendments were introduced in conference committee that would have kept the age to conceal carry at 21 or reduce it to 19 instead of 18 to keep conceal carry out of the hands of high school students. They all failed.

Reducing the conceal carry age in Kansas to that of many high school seniors, puts this bill in opposition to gun safety line items in [SMSD's Legislative Platform](#) and [Kansas PTA's Legislative Priorities](#).

Concerns

It is possible the governor may veto this bill. If that happens it will go back to just the House for a vote, as the Senate already has enough votes to override a veto. The House is just four votes shy of a veto override, so we may want to reach out to legislators to ensure some of those NO votes don't flip to YES.

- **PASSED [CCR SB 55](#): Transgender girls prohibited from participating on girls' athletic teams.** This is another example of legislative overreach. The Kansas State High School Activities Association (KSHAA) already has a transgender policy in place and there are only five girls currently participating in sports in Kansas. This bill appears to be legislating a non-existent problem.

Note, the description in the link for SB 55 does not match the contents of the final bill. Original contents of SB 55 were stripped and SB 208 was added.

Be an informed voter. Find your legislators at ksleglookup.org and note how they voted. Are you happy with your representation?

The SMSD area legislators were consistent across all of these bills.

Voting NO: Senators Corson, Holscher, Sykes, and Pettey AND Representatives Clayton, Featherston, Hoye, Ousley, Neighbor, Parker, Poskin, Ruiz, Stogsdill, Vaughn, Woodard, and Xu

Voting YES: Senators Thompson and Warren AND Representative Esau

Thanks for staying engaged & remember the importance of voting in state and local elections!