

# Legislative Update

May 17, 2010--Special Session Update

Five days into the special session it appears as though there is still no consensus among legislators regarding the governor's proposals. Most of the committee and subcommittee sessions have been filled with questions and explanations from WVDE staff regarding the language and implementation of the proposed legislation. Both House and Senate Education Committees have asked very pointed questions.

The issue that creeps into each discussion is the Race to the Top (RTTT). Legislators are angry the proposals are disguised as "It's all about the students" when in reality "It's all about getting federal dollars."

WVEA, through lobbyists, member contact, local activities and press conferences, has continued to insist that many of the proposals will have little or no impact on student achievement. Keep contacting your legislators and make your feelings known on the issues.

One of the contentious bills is **HB 105/SB1012 – Salary Incentives for select schools/teachers**. On Sunday evening a Senate subcommittee increased the amount of money for teachers in high poverty or high minority schools to \$2,000 vs \$1,000 as originally proposed. It also increased the bonus for math and science teachers in those schools from \$500 to \$5,000. It was also amended to say the total incentive for a teacher could not exceed \$5,000. A bonus for "student growth" is also in the bill and remains at \$1,000.

The administration stated the money used for these bonuses was coming from money the administration had scheduled next year for base building raises for all teachers.

More details are also coming out about the number of schools who qualify for the high poverty and high minority funds. Only the top 25% of high poverty schools would qualify for the bonuses – a total of 177 schools. A list provided by the WVDE lists many schools with 63% of their students in poverty; yet, they will not qualify for the bonus. Another 64 schools are listed as being high minority. There are 28 schools that qualify in both categories.

Other bills introduced in the special session include (bills are still in education committee unless otherwise noted):

- SB 1001/HB109 – Teacher Empowerment Teams – passed both Education Committees with only minor changes
- SB 1002/HB 111 – Annual Personnel Evaluations (on Senate Floor)
- SB 1006/HB 110 – Alternative Certification programs
- SB 1007/HB 104 – Charter Innovation Zones 2.0
- SB 1008/HB 106 – Health Screenings
- SB 1009/HB 108 – Low performing schools (on Senate Floor )
- SB 1012/HB 104 – Salary Incentives
- SB 1013/HB 107 – Teacher Hiring

Check the WVEA Website, [www.wvea.org](http://www.wvea.org), regularly for the latest information and ways you can assist in the special session.