



2010 Legislative Session is Adrift

After starting the 2010 session at a rapid pace, the legislative session is slowing down. The Legislature is waiting for a decision from the state Supreme Court regarding Governor Pawlenty's unallotments and for Congress to extend additional Medicaid funding for another year. Until these two issues are resolved, legislative leadership isn't going to make another move toward balancing the state's budget. The DFL and GOP statewide endorsing conventions begin in two weeks (DFL April 23-25, GOP April 30 – May 2) and with so many legislators running for Governor, there is pressure to be away from the Capitol, especially if they are waiting for others to make decisions.

The House HHS Finance committee cancelled all of their meetings from now until just following the DFL convention. We are hearing that the House will unveil a K-12 bill sometime during the first week in May. There is no word on when the Senate plans to unveil HHS or E-12 legislation.

Tomorrow morning, the Legislative Commission on Planning and Fiscal Policy will review the state's cash flow situation. Most school officials are well aware of the impact of the state's cash flow situation as school payments are being delayed. There is still a big concern about the cash flow situation beginning next September. Tomorrow's hearing may shed more light on the situation.

Race To The Top and Education Reform

The battle between the Governor and the DFL Legislature over education reform issues is heating up again. The Governor is using the state's failed RTTT application as proof that Minnesota needs to adopt his alternative licensure and tenure reform proposals. The DFL Legislature and Education Minnesota are digging in against both proposals. Governor Pawlenty has said that unless the Legislature makes these changes he won't instruct MDE to submit a second round application for RTTT funds.

Mandate Relief

Mandate relief and all other education issues are on hold until the session picks up. In the meantime, we still need to make legislative contacts specifically requesting the elimination of the maintenance of effort requirement for school support staff.