

March 4, 2010

Senate K-12 Finance

1. SF 2769 Betzold – Renewal of expiring referendum by action of the school board
  - a. Testifier – John Carlson, Superintendent Anoka-Hennepin,
    - i. Anoka is facing huge budget cuts and are taking drastic action to balance the budget by reducing staff and closing schools. Anoka will have to renew a referendum this year and fear that it will be a very difficult time politically to pass it.
  - b. Sen. Bonoff has concern about giving unlimited power to a school board to continue renewing referendums. She asked about a possible cap on the number of renewals.
  - c. Pete Wilcoxon – White Bear Lake School District; Lori Swanson-White bear lake school board; Michael Levitt – Superintendent of White Bear Lake
    - i. Testified in support.
  - d. Sen. Hann – supports idea but school board’s hands are tied in controlling costs. Wants more freedom for school boards to manage employee costs. Wants to change the collective bargaining system, doesn’t want staff to receive raises when education funding is held flat. Wants to change MN PELRA and get rid of seniority.
  - e. OPPOSITION - Karen Kleanser – from department of Education – Governor does not support this bill. Referendum was passed for a specific time period. Jim Bartholemul – MN Business partnership – eliminates the ability of local voters to decide to extend.
    - i. Wants – binding arbitration, allow school districts to limit contracts to money from state.
  - f. ACTION –Laid Over for Possible Inclusion in the Omnibus Bill
2. SF 511 Rosen - Making all School Districts eligible for the alternative facilities bonding and levy program, making all school districts eligible for the deferred maintenance program
  - a. Will let rural school districts levy for deferred maintenance
  - b. Current Programs:
    - i. Levy without voter approval based on health and safety
    - ii. Voter improved levy for bonds to pay for buildings
    - iii. For larger districts – use bonding to pay for facilities needs
    - iv. Operating Capitol –
  - c. ACTION – laid over for possible inclusion in omnibus bill