

The 2020 legislative session ended midnight Sunday with the prospects of a session special highly likely. Numerous omnibus bills were passed over the last weekend on topics such as higher education, agriculture, transportation, health and human services but several larger bills were not finished, primarily taxes and bonding. So, another special session is on the horizon to take up these bills, if they can reach agreement on these bills. It will also be necessary for the Governor to call a special session by June 12 if he decides to continue his peacetime emergency powers and to allow the legislature the opportunity to continue to work on legislation to address the pandemic, if necessary.

Education Finance bill passes

The House and Senate passed [HF4415](#), the omnibus education finance bill late Sunday, and is headed to the governor for his signature. This legislation includes provisions to address issues related to the transition to distance learning but does not include the requirement to pay hourly school district employees.

A more detailed summary is attached but here are the key provisions in HF4415.

- Allows MDE to waive any requirements related to earning credit, credits for advancement in grade, graduation, or testing.
- Adjusts school aid formulas so that revenue is not lost to schools due to COVID-19 closures and adjustments to the delivery of educationally-related services for special education aid, school meals, career and technical revenue, nonpublic pupil transportation aid, interdistrict desegregation transportation aid, integration revenue, literacy incentive aid, school-age care revenue, early childhood screening revenue, and adult basic education aid.
- Allows a district to transfer any funds in FY20 and FY21 only not already assigned to, or encumbered by staff salary and benefits, or otherwise encumbered by federal law, from any reserved account or operating fund in order to pay for:
 - care to eligible on-site children during the school day

- additional transportation costs needed in providing distance learning instruction and meal delivery during the closure period and the distance learning period
- additional costs related to technology needed to provide distance learning instruction
- pay the portion of staff salary and benefits of employees paid through the community service fund normally funded by fees that were refunded, waived, or otherwise not paid during the closure period and distance learning period
- pay the portion of food service fund staff salary and benefits normally funded by meal reimbursement revenue during the closure period or distance learning period
- Forecast adjustments to reflect the February 2020 budget forecast.

The House and Senate reached agreement on an education policy bill but were not able to advance the legislation before their constitutional deadline of midnight Sunday so nothing passed. It's very likely this will also be taken up a special session.