

Funding Formula Bill (or Bills) Could be Introduced Monday

House Education Committee Chairman Rep. Lance Clow, R-Twin Falls, indicated today that he expects a bill related to the Public School Funding Formula to be introduced in his committee Monday morning. Since the original draft was revealed earlier in the session, legislators and education stakeholders have been working on multiple revisions.

“I still expect to find areas of agreement and disagreement,” Clow said in noting that introducing the bill does not mean the language is carved in stone. He also expressed a desire to get the bill’s verbiage in the hands of the public amid criticism regarding a lack of transparency in the process of developing the legislation.



A separate funding formula bill with different language is in the pipeline on the Senate side and could be introduced Monday as well. At this late stage of the session it would have to be introduced in the Senate State Affairs Committee and then reassigned to the Senate Education Committee.

The IEA continues to monitor developments relating to funding formula legislation. We also continue to provide feedback and insight on language and policy aspects of the funding formula and cooperate with elected officials and stakeholders to find effective solutions that benefit Idaho students and professional educators.

Private School Voucher Bill Introduced in House Education Committee

After a broad-based coalition of education stakeholders helped defeat a private school voucher bill last year, a new effort to divert public funds to private and religious schools has surfaced late in the 2019 session. Rep. Ron Mendive, R-Coeur d’Alene, introduced legislation this morning that would establish “education savings accounts” that can be used for school tuition and other education expenses. Stay tuned for information about when, or if, this legislation might receive a full hearing.

To refresh your memory on why the IEA and every significant education stakeholder group opposes private school vouchers and how we banded together to defeat this troublesome legislation last year, visit the [Protect Idaho’s Public Schools website](#).



House Votes Down State Board of Education Budget Bill-For Now

The House voted 41-29 against JFAC's budget bill for operations of the State Board of Education Thursday. [HB 226](#) faced opposition from Republicans who voiced concern about the continued increase in staff members at the State Board and from Democrats who used the vote as a fulcrum to express frustration about being left out of revisions to the new Public School Funding Formula.

Included in the defeated bill was \$263,000 in funding for review of Master Educator Premium portfolios and \$100,000 in funding for a new public education task force proposed by Gov. Little. JFAC will now work on an alternative budget bill for the State Board after they dig deeper on the concerns expressed by House members who voted against HB 226.

Bill Requiring Opt-Out Information for Immunizations Will Not Move Forward

Legislation that would have required schools to provide information about opt-out policies to parents in conjunction with guidelines about the state's immunization guidelines will not get a hearing in the Senate. Senate Health and Welfare Committee Chairman Fred Martin, R-Boise, declined to hold a hearing on [HB 133](#), effectively killing it for the session. Immunization opt-out rates have increased by almost 25 percent in recent years, sparking concern about outbreaks of measles and other infectious diseases.

Guns In Schools Bill Will Not Get a Hearing

[HB 203](#), which would have allowed anyone with an enhanced carry permit to concealed carry a firearm on school grounds without notification will not be advancing. The House State Affairs Committee introduced the bill on February 26 but will not give it a more extensive public hearing. This legislation was sponsored by Rep. Chad Christensen, R-Ammon and Rep. Priscilla Giddings, R-White Bird.

Make sure you get all the latest news on legislative and policy developments from the session [by subscribing to the Hotline](#), which is e-mailed every Friday and as developments warrant during the legislative session.