ON MONDAY, MAY 10, THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE VOTED ON SEVERAL BILLS:

SB 2094 by Taylor: A TSTA opposed bill that would create an outcome-based funding scheme for learning loss recovery.

HB 699 by Rosenthal: A TSTA-supported bill that would allow for excused absences for students facing chronic or life-threatening illnesses.

HB 773 by VanDeaver: would add a new indicator to the school accountability system for students who successfully complete a program in career and technical education.

SB 487 by Hughes: a TSTA-opposed bill would reduce oversight of charter schools by local governments by exempting them from local zoning rules that protect public safety.

ON TUESDAY, MAY 11, THE SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE VOTED OUT CONTROVERSIAL HB3 “CLEAN-UP” BILL & VOUCHER BILL

On Tuesday, May 11, the Senate Education Committee met to vote on two controversial bills.

First, the committee approved House Bill 1525 by Huberty (Sponsor: Taylor), the so-called “cleanup bill” for last session’s omnibus school finance bill, House Bill 3. The bill was voted on in lieu of its Senate Companion, SB 1536, which was heard in a public hearing by the committee in April.

The committee substitute for the bill was released mere hours before the hearing and was more than 30 pages in length. Unfortunately, there were several changes made to the House version of the bill that caused TSTA to raise concern to members of the committee:

- While the House version extended the completion date for educators to complete the Reading Academies to the end of the 2023-2024 school year, the senate version would only extend to 2022-2023 school year.
- Added-in provisions that would grant the commissioner of education extremely broad authority over decisions on how to fund school districts.
- Directs districts to delay spending on all of the federal stimulus funds.

After working with TSTA in preparation for the vote, Sen. Jose Menendez expressed TSTA’s concern over whether the bill would insure that increases to teacher pay would be maintained this session. The Chairman, Larry Taylor, indicated that that was the intent.

Ultimately, the bill passed out of committee 8-2-1.
Finally, the Committee also reconsidered the vote for a TSTA-opposed voucher bill, due to a procedural error. Members approved the bill, SB 1968, on a 7-4 vote.

**FLOOR ACTION**

1147 by Huberty  (Sponsor: Taylor) Relating to military readiness for purposes of the college, career, or military readiness outcomes bonus under the Foundation School Program.

**SENATE CONCURS ON HOUSE AMENDMENTS:**

SB 346 by Paxton  (Sponsor: Dutton) – 27-3

**COMMITTEE 5.13.21:**

**TSTA Supported:**

HB 189 by Canales  (Sponsor: Lucio): This bill would put severance payments to open-enrollment school administrators serving as educational leaders and chief executive officers of schools as though the person were a superintendent of a school district for purposes of limitations on severance payments. This bill was voted favorably from the committee.

**ALSO HEARD OR VOTED ON IN SENATE ED THIS WEEK:**

SB 1083 by Campbell: would allow for parents to refuse consent for a student to receive any part of a school district’s human sexuality instruction and would require a school district to receive written consent from parents before providing any human sexuality instruction. This bill was voted favorably out of committee.

HB 1080 by Patterson  (Sponsor: Nelson): would clarify that students who receive mental health treatment may not be banned from participating in University Interscholastic League activities based solely on their mental health condition. This bill was voted favorably from committee.

HB 159 by Mary González  (Sponsor: Lucio): Makes required teacher trainings for certificate renewal more inclusive of serving students with a disability, including understanding, planning for, and delivering instruction to students with disabilities. This bill was voted favorably from committee.

HB 2721 by Lucio III  (Sponsor: Lucio): would provide a mechanism to ban a student from future University Interscholastic League (UIL) events who has assaulted a UIL official. This bill was voted favorably from committee.

HB 1342 by Leach  (Sponsor: Perry): would allow for school districts to access health care claims data, free of charge, and subject to HIPAA laws. This bill was voted favorably from committee.

CSHB 2120 by Bell  (Sponsor: Perry): would require school boards to adopt a grievance policy with a 120-day timeline. This bill was left pending in committee.

HB 1133 by Clardy  (Sponsor: Bettencourt): would allow voters to decide whether to repeal the Rusk County School Equalization Tax. This bill was voted favorably from committee.

HB 129 by Mary González  (Sponsor: Zaffirini): would implement digital citizenship curriculum for middle school students. This bill was left pending in committee.
HB 690 by Metcalf (Sponsor: Zaffirini): was voted favorably out of committee. This bill would have SBOE require trustees to complete training on school safety with curriculum and materials developed in conjunction with the Texas School Safety Center.

HB 1496 by VanDeaver (Sponsor: Lucio): was voted favorably out of committee. This bill would require districts to document management fees paid by or to the district regarding purchasing contracts or programs.

**House concurs on Senate amendments to HB 1585, the TRS-Sunset Bill. The Senate amendments would ease return-to-work restrictions for retirees.**