



SMITH HILL REPORT

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School Distribution of Federal Stimulus Money

Below is an initial estimate of the money that will be available to Rhode Island school districts represented by the AFT. It demonstrates the significance that AFT, RIFTHP and local union lobbying has made in the support of public education in tough economic times. There remains uncertainty over what restrictions will be placed on these additional federal dollars to public education. This money is not available for this current school year, but will be available for the next two school years.

In addition to this funding, the federal stimulus package (known formally as the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, or ARRA) included \$165 million to support K-12 and higher education this fiscal year. The House Finance Committee is considering how the money will be distributed as part of its deliberations on the Supplemental Budget bill.

Estimated 2-Year Distribution to School Districts based on FY 2009 Distributions

<u>District</u>	<u>Title I</u>	<u>IDEA</u>	<u>Total</u>	<u>District</u>	<u>Title I</u>	<u>IDEA</u>	<u>Total</u>
Central Falls	1,811,422	1,335,396	3,146,818	Pawtucket	3,569,496	3,686,088	7,255,585
Coventry	391,770	1,741,744	2,133,514	Providence	17,363,771	9,606,842	26,970,612
Cranston	1,724,140	3,815,605	5,539,746	Warwick	1,058,036	4,008,286	5,066,321
Johnston	458,869	1,328,889	1,787,758	West Warwick	838,702	1,356,268	2,194,970
Lincoln	257,673	1,073,513	1,331,185	Woonsocket	2,627,329	2,653,094	5,280,423
N. Providence	505,639	1,238,621	1,744,260				

Budget to be Submitted March 10

Governor Donald Carcieri had obtained yet another extension in submitting his 2010 budget plan to the General Assembly. The Governor is now expected to issue his proposal to fund State and local services on Tuesday, March 10th.

House Pension Commission Meeting Schedule Accelerates

RIFTHP members and leaders continue to attend and monitor the activity of the House Special Commission to Review All Aspects of the State Pension and Retirement System. On Wednesday, March 4, the Commission heard testimony from Treasurer Caprio's Chief of Staff Mark Dingley recommending the institution of a minimum age requirement, which would require many to work longer before retiring. Mark Dingley's presentation also highlighted the increased cost of

the existing pension plan to the State due to the recent poor performance of the stock markets.

The Chair of the Commission, Timothy Williamson, announced that the Commission will meet twice next week and twice the following week. Meetings have not been formally announced but are tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, March 11, Thursday, March 12, Tuesday, March 17 and Wednesday, March 18 at the Rise of the House (approximately 4:30).

Bill Introductions

House Bills

- **Teacher Compensation – Merit Pay**
(H5527 *Loughlin, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would weaken the statutory provisions of the salary step system. It also allows school committees to negotiate other means of compensation for teachers including, but not limited to, merit pay.
- **Elimination of Caruolo Act**
(H5547 *Gemma, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would repeal the provisions of the so-called "Caruolo Act" preventing school districts from appealing for more funding from a municipality.
- **Definition of Vesting**
(H5586 *Lally, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would define "active member" and "vested" as it applies to members of the State Retirement System.
- **RI Statewide Educator Health Insurance Plan**
(H5613 *McNamara, House Corporations*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would provide a mechanism for group purchasing of health, dental and vision insurance for all Rhode Island teachers while preserving bargaining rights.
- **Charter Public Schools**
(H5632 *Silva, House Finance*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide a new structure for the creation, operation and funding of charter schools. The act makes distinctions for district charter schools, independent charters and mayoral academies.
- **School – Municipality Budget Disputes**
(H5709 *Loughlin, House Finance*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide that if State aid to education of general revenue sharing is revealed or suspended, then school budget compliance with the provisions of subsections 16-2-21.4(a) through 16-2-21.4(c) would be suspended for that year. The Governor would create a three (3) member panel to create a remedy.
- **Voter Initiative**
(H5734 *Driver, House Judiciary*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would provide a detailed process by which a proponent of a voter initiative and referendum proposal would present the proposal to the Secretary of State, the General Assembly and the Governor.
- **Scope of Bargaining – Waiver Payments, Spouse Coverage**
(H5761 *Gablinske, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would prohibit public school teachers from negotiating payments for medical insurance waivers in their contracts. It would also require teachers hired after July 1, 2009, to obtain health insurance coverage through their spouse or domestic partner's employer if that coverage is available.
- **Continuing Contract – Teacher Collective Bargaining**
(H5762 *Palumbo, House Labor*)
The RIFTHP **supports** this act which would amend section 28-9.3-9 to provide that if a successor collective bargaining agreement has not been agreed to by the parties, then the terms and conditions of the existing teachers' contract would remain in full force and effect until a new agreement is reached.
- **Mandatory School Statewide Purchasing – Transportation, Medical**
(H5801 *Watson, House Health, Education and Welfare*)
The RIFTHP **opposes** this act which would repeal the statewide purchasing system as it currently stands and would institute a new statewide purchasing system for municipalities of regional school districts to include medical insurance purchases.