



March, 2014

Final Legislative Update

The 2014 legislative session definitely had a lot of "hurry up and wait" in it. The chemical spill and water crisis dominated a large part of the beginning of the session and continued throughout the session. As usual, we were waiting at the midnight hour for bills to pass or fail. Over 1000 bills were introduced this legislative session, with approximately 90 passing. Fortunately, the salary bill was one that passed at 11:50 pm Saturday night. Unfortunately, any bill that had a dollar amount attached to it was doomed for failure this year. WVSSPA never wants one of our other bills that has a price tag to interfere with a pay raise bill, even though all that we introduce are of the same importance.

SB-391/HB 4261- Salary — Service Personnel will see an increase in the base pay beginning July 1, 2014. Additionally, added into the salary bill is approximately \$4.2 million to address salary equity for service personnel. Based upon a long-standing court decision, education employee salaries must be at least 90% of salaries in the highest paid counties. By law, the school aid formula must be adjusted periodically to ensure "salary equity", and the legislature is required to include the "equity" money in the salary schedule. About \$120.00 per employee in most counties is required to be added to achieve equity.

Passed

Example: If you currently make \$20,000 per year in state base pay, you can expect \$40 per month increase, \$12 per month equity increase, plus your annual \$32 a month increment pay. This would be an \$840 pay raise for a ten-month employee, a \$1008 for a 240-day employee and a \$1096.20 pay increase for a 261-day employee.

Example: If you currently make \$25,000 per year in state base pay, you can expect \$50 per month increase, \$12 per month equity increase, plus your annual \$32 a month increment pay. This would be a \$940 pay raise for a ten-month employee, a \$1128* for a 240-day employee and a \$1226.70 pay increase for a 261-day employee. *Note: 1 inaccurate figured listed in the last publication.

HB 4516 - RESA Bill — This bill would not allow a county board of education to utilize the services of an employee of a RESA to: (a) displace service personnel and professional instructional personnel positions of the county boards of education or; (b) avoid the employment of additional service personnel and professional instructional personnel of the county boards of education. This bill was placed in a subcommittee. The day the committee met the WVDE had a majority of their lead staff in the audience including the State Superintendent. WVDE had also urged RESA directors to attend. Four RESA directors showed. Had it not been for the bad weather, I'm sure they all would have been there. Delegate Dave Pethtel was the subcommittee chair and did a wonderful job. As your President, I testified and indicated that in some counties RESA employees are displacing our service personnel. Of course, RESA directors don't see it that way. Chairman Pethtel stated to those present that he felt there was a lot of distrust among school board employees regarding RESAs. It was voted that this bill be placed in a study (for the upcoming interim sessions and the next legislative session) and information be collected. WVSSPA has sent a FOIA request to all county boards asking for the dollar amount that is paid to RESA.

SB 461 - West Virginia Future Fund — The intention of this bill is to create a means of conserving a portion of the state's revenue derived from the increased revenue proceeds by the state as a result of any new oil and natural gas production as well as other funding sources as the Legislature may designate in order to meet future needs. **The amended version of this bill states a portion of proceeds from certain severance tax revenues for future expenditures placed in an interest-bearing special revenue account.** When the State decides to provide an employee pay raise, it could come from this revenue source in the future. WVSSPA has met with Senate President Kessler and are encouraged about a long-term funding source for service personnel pay raises. *Passed*



HB 3156 - Ensuring confidentiality - This legislation guarantees confidentiality between public employees and organizations that represent them. Certain school boards had begun issuing subpoenas attempting to gather confidential information discussed regarding the grievance process. AFT-WV & WVSSPA fought to protect our members' rights in the grievance process working H.B.3156 through the House Labor and Judiciary committees and then again in the Senate Labor and Judiciary committees. The bill was laid over on the last day of session and appeared to be dead. At 11:15 PM the bill was considered by the full Senate and passed. The House concurred at 11:45 and now awaits the governor's signature.

Passed

HB 4283 — Raising the Minimum Wage — The minimum wage is \$7.25 currently per hour. This bill mandates that on January 1, 2015, the minimum wage will be \$8.00 and on January 1, 2016, the minimum wage will be \$8.75. The WV AFL-CIO worked diligently on this particular issue. We are proud of the work our labor allies contributed to this session. We are all about the working people of WV. *Passed*