STATE OF ARKANSAS
House of Representatives

Arkansas House Newsletter

March 19, 2021

Week 10 of the 2021 Regular Session

In the 10th week of the 2021 Regular Session, the House passed several bills focusing on improved education.
Once enacted, these bills would increase funding for our public schools, raise teacher salaries, and require every high school student to complete a computer science course.

HB1677 raises the foundation funding amount for public schools from the current $6,899 per student to $7,182 per student for the next school year. It increases the amount for the 2022-2023 school year to $7,349 per student. The bill also outlines enhanced funding amounts for school districts where a large majority of students qualify for the national school lunch program. This bill will now be considered by the Senate Education Committee.

This week, the House also addressed teacher salaries. While the 92nd General Assembly worked to improve the minimum teacher salary, our teachers continue to make less than those surrounding states when it comes to the average salary. The current average salary for teachers is $49,822.

HB1614 seeks to raise the average salary by creating the Teacher Salary Equalization Fund. The bill outlines a statewide target average of $51,822 for the 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 school years. This bill would direct the Department of Education to disperse money from the Equalization Fund to districts whose average teacher salary falls below $51,822.

The House voted 97-0 in favor of HB1614. The bill is now before the Senate Education Committee.

Meanwhile, another education bill is making its way to the Governor’s desk.
The House passed SB107, which requires students entering the ninth grade class of 2022-2023 to earn one credit in a computer science course before graduation. SB107 states that beginning with the 2023-2024 school year, a public school district shall employ a computer science teacher at each high school.

The House also passed two other education bills this week, HB1451 and HB 1594.

HB1451 allows a public school district to adopt a bilingual program or a dual-immersion program approved by the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education.

HB1594 allows the Division of Elementary and Secondary Education to grant a teaching license to Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) recipients who have completed the necessary requirements.

You can find summaries of other legislation passed this week as well recorded meetings, links to live streams, and committee agendas at www.arkansashouse.org.