

The FISCAL REPORT an informational update

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Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 on Education Finance Holds First Hearing

The Assembly Budget Subcommittee No. 2 met for the first time on Tuesday March 17, 2009. The Chair began the hearing with short remarks regarding the rationale for Budget subcommittee hearings when we have an enacted 2009-10 State Budget. Chair Wilmer Amina Carter (D-Rialto) cited the following as reasons for continued discussion:

- The federal stimulus funds
- The Legislative Analyst's Office's (LAO's) forecast of an \$8 billion shortfall
- May Revision revenues
- The special election
- Unforeseen implementation issues with the enacted State Budget

In addition to identifying the best use of the federal stimulus funds and balancing the budget based on updated revenue forecasts, the LAO cited two other issues for further consideration:

- Addressing issues regarding implementation of K-12 categorical flexibility
- Reviewing education mandates and their associated costs

The hearing provided members with an overview of 2009-10 Proposition 98 funding and the Budget, which was intended to give them a baseline as they move forward with further Budget discussion and decisions. Thus, much of the hearing covered matters on which we've already reported.

Witnesses representing K-14 education were asked for their 2009 education priorities. Dr. Glen Thomas, the new Secretary for Education, presented his priorities:

1. Clarifying the pathway for preschool, both within and outside of the parameters of the federal stimulus.
2. Working on the uneven quality of preschool.
3. Working to align K-12 standards with college readiness or readiness for the workforce.
4. Teacher preparation.
 - a. Are there opportunities for displaced workers
 - b. Rethinking how we prepare teachers and make it easier to secure a credential

Gavin Payne, testifying on behalf of Jack O'Connell, Superintendent of Public Instruction, addressed the following:

1. Maximizing federal stimulus funding and getting it out to the field as quickly as possible-hopefully before mid-May.
2. Stressing that the Superintendent's core priority is proficiency for all students.
3. Noting issues relating to transition.

Members also had questions regarding the federal stimulus funds, but deferred most until March 18 when the Assembly will hold an informational hearing on the that subject.

-Deborah Harmon

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