

To: Council About Parochiaid
From: Cara Marie Dobie and Courtney VanCamp
Date: September 17, 2021
Re: Legislative Report

K-12 Budget

Just before summer recess, the House passed H 4411, which the Senate passed and the Governor signed in early August. Of all of the work to be done on the FY '22 budget, this was the piece that made it to the Governor's desk; it is the FY '22 K-12 School Aid budget.

The remainder of the state's budget is under negotiation. It appears that those negotiations are thus far productive, and that the legislature is poised to pass a budget before the Oct. 1 deadline (failure to do so results in a partial state shutdown until a budget finally passes). The legislature is, out of necessity and care, separating the three sticking points on a state budget to ease otherwise tense negotiations and make real progress where progress can be made: passing a "general government (meaning non-school)" FY '22 budget; spending tens-of-billions in federal ARP funds; and spending \$4.5 billion in state General Fund *surplus*.

Two major pieces of budget and boilerplate that grabbed attention this summer: 31n (ongoing program to enhance access to mental health professionals in school, using both school-employed and "clinical" – meaning school-community health centers – professionals); and a new 31o program.

With regard to 31n:

- The final version includes an additional \$17 million for a total of \$53.9 million in the program

With regard to the new 31o program:

- This is a new program, allocating \$240 million to hire enough school counselors, social workers, nurses, and psychologists to achieve each profession's "ideal" student-to-professional ratio
- Each district awarded funds must show that they have a plan in place to fully-fund each new position on their own within 3 years; and that the award to each district starts at 100%, and is lowered by 1/3 until the district is fully responsible for 100% of the costs of each new position