

February Forecast Shows Increased Surplus

Minnesota Management and Budget (MMB) conducts two annual budget projections that legislators use as a guide when crafting legislation related to budgeting and spending. One occurs in November and the other in February. The February forecast, released Thursday, shows an increase in the budget surplus of \$181 million. The projected surplus now totals \$1.513 billion.

With the release of the updated forecast, we now expect more chips to fall into place around the Legislature. The governor will release his supplemental budget proposal next, and House and Senate committees will be given a budget target on how much money they may have to work with in crafting a supplemental budget. However, the odd-numbered years of the biennium are when the state budget is set, so constitutionally, no additional funding needs to happen this year.

Constitutional amendment

This week, Rep. Rena Moran introduced [legislation](#) to amend the constitutional provision addressing public education. A House hearing has yet to be scheduled. On Friday, March 6, the Senate E12 Policy and Finance committee will have a discussion on the constitutional amendment, although legislation has yet to be introduced in the Senate.

Symposium on Opportunity Gap

Rep. Davnie, Rep. Youakim and legislative leaders [announced](#) they will be holding an all-day Education Symposium on Friday, March 6. At this symposium, legislators will receive a high-level overview of Minnesota's education system, with a focus on solutions to reduce the opportunity gap. Details are yet to be announced.

Committee hearings of interest

The [House Early Childhood Policy and Finance Division](#) received a brief overview the [Governor's Children's Cabinet](#) from and MDE provided an update on [preschool development grant](#).

The [House Education Policy Committee](#) had a full agenda of bills as they try to advance legislation prior to the first committee deadline of March 20. The committee reviewed the [MDE policy bill](#), and learned about trauma-informed schools, including [legislation](#) to provide trauma-informed school incentive aid. The committee also heard a series of bills addressing school discipline policies. The committee did not address the prek dismissal provision from the MDE policy bill. That will instead be heard in the House Early Childhood Policy and Finance Division sometime the week of March 9.

The [Senate E12 Policy and Finance Committees](#) heard several bills focused on reading strategies ([SF3989](#), [SF2990](#), [SF3187](#)) and [early learning scholarships](#).

Bill introductions of interest

[HF3658](#): Proposing an amendment to the Minnesota Constitution, article XIII, section 1; providing for a fundamental right to quality public education for all children.

[HF3881](#): Requiring paid orientation for paraprofessionals; appropriating money for paraprofessional training.

[HF3888](#): Modifying provisions for paraprofessionals; appropriating money.

[HF3902](#): MDE policy provisions related to early learning.