

Facility bond, career tech bill wait in “suspense” for floor vote

By Allen Young

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The Senate Appropriations Committee sent education-related bills for school facilities, career technical education, and online learning onto the “suspense” file Monday, a legislative purgatory that serves as a graveyard for some bills and a launch pad to a floor vote for others.

Lawmakers returned from summer recess this week for a flurry of activity that will culminate at the end of the month. August 31 is the final day for each house to pass legislation. After that, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger has until September 30 to sign or veto bills passed by the Legislature before September 1.

The following bills went on suspense:

AB 220 – School construction bond The bill from Assemblywoman Julia Brownley, D-Santa Monica, would provide \$4.6 billion in bonds for K-12 construction. Specifically, the bond would provide \$2.5 billion for new school construction and \$1 billion for modernization. There is also \$500 million directed for “high performance” grants, \$250 million for charter schools, and \$250 million for career technical education facilities. Also, \$50 million is provided for joint-use projects and \$50 million for preschools.

AB 2446 – Career technical education

AB 2446 by Assemblyman Warren Furutani, D-South Los Angeles, would add career technical education courses as an alternative to the visual or performing arts and foreign language graduation requirement. Eligible career tech courses would need to be aligned to the standards and framework adopted by the California State Board of Education. Under the bill, schools that do not offer career tech courses would not be required to start new ones.

AB 2027 – Online learning

AB 2027 from Assemblyman Bob Blumenfield, D-Van Nuys, would allow local educational agencies to collect Average Daily Attendance for students taking online courses. Specifically, the bill would allow school districts, county offices of education and charter schools that offer online education courses to claim by 2013 attendance toward ADA on the basis of pupil attendance in online classes.

AB 2079 – Athletic recruiting

AB 2079 from Assemblyman Tom Torlakson, D-Antioch, would formalize rules surrounding the recruitment of student athletes by colleges either in California or elsewhere. Under the bill, collegiate recruiters would be required to give athletes a disclosure letter at first contact that provides the cost of attending the university and any restrictions of the coverage of a proposed scholarship. A scholarship offer would need to be put into writing one week after a verbal offer.