



Legislative Update

by Otto Fajen
MNEA Legislative Director
otto.fajen@mnea.org

Number 15
April 21, 2017
www.mnea.org

BUDGET

The Senate Appropriations Committee met on April 20. The House version of next year's budget was drafted presuming that HCB 3 (Fitzpatrick) would be approved and the Circuit Breaker for qualifying, low income, elderly renters would be repealed. HCB 3 would increase state revenues by an estimated \$52 million by eliminating the Circuit Breaker income tax credit for renters. However, the Senate did not bring HCB 3 to a vote, so the committee revised the budget to reduce proposed spending by a corresponding amount.

The Senate committee version of HCS/HB 2 (Fitzpatrick), the K-12 budget bill for the 2018 fiscal year, cuts funding of the school formula back to roughly last year's core level. This leaves open a range of \$48 million from essentially no increase to full funding (based on the reduced funding level created with enactment of SB 586 in 2016), when the formula is addressed in conference committee.

The Senate committee accepted the House position to restore pupil transportation funding to the current year level, for a total of \$105 million including \$37 million in general revenue. The Senate committee removed House language providing that statewide pupil assessments shall not be used to lower district accreditation or teacher evaluations.

HOUSE PASSES STUDENT TRANSFER BILL

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to HCS/HB 118 (Wood) on April 18 by a vote of 138-6. The bill relates to student transfers from unaccredited districts. The bill caps sending district tuition, allows receiving districts to respect class size standards and creates a process for intra-district transfers within the unaccredited district.

The perfected version includes several House amendments:

HA 1 (Wood) regarding appeals of transportation hardship transfer requests.

HA 2 (Basye) to add his HB 888 to allow school districts to cooperate with municipalities to provide pupil transportation.

HA 3 (Swan) to add her HB 457 to allow children who attend early childhood education programs that are under contracts with districts or charter schools to be included in the average daily attendance of the district or charter school.

HA 4 (Rowland) to add his HB 677 to allow a school district to use a calendar based on hours of attendance rather than hours and days of attendance, if the minimum number of hours is at least 1,044

hours of actual pupil attendance. The Association supports local control of school calendars and supports this provision.

HA 5 (Houghton) to add his HB 280 to restrict school district authority to set the opening date for the school term more than ten calendar days prior to the first Monday in September. The Association opposes this provision.

HA 6 (Morgan) to add the provisions of SB 362 (Hummel) to provide that a student receive instruction in Braille reading and writing as part of his or her individualized education plan unless instruction in Braille is determined not appropriate for the child.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to two House Committee Bills on April 18.

HCB 4 (Lauer) includes the provisions of HB 93, HB 94 and HB 799. The bill allows high school students to take either the ACT or the ACT WorkKeys test as a state-reimbursed test. The bill also allows a teacher to count hours spent in a local business externship as contact hours of professional development. This bill revises options for financial assistance through the Missouri Works Training Program. The Association supports the bill.

HCB 5 (Lauer) requires This bill requires each school district to offer a course on computer programming to all high school students. Students may count the course as an elective or practical arts credit. The course may be offered as an online course or through videoconferencing.

DUE PROCESS

The House General Laws Committee approved HCS/HB 555 (Ross) on April 18. The bill requires school districts to contact former school district employers before offering employment to new employees. The bill also requires school districts to provide information about former employees to prospective employers concerning any violation of board regulation "related to abusive behavior toward a student". While well-intended, the language lacks clarity and may fail to provide meaningful due process to accused employees.

HOUSE PERFECTS VISITING SCHOLAR CERTIFICATE

The House gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to HB 97 (Swan) on April 18. The bill would establish an initial visiting scholars certificate of license to teach. The temporary certificate is limited to target staffing in business-education partnerships such as Northland CAPS in the Kansas City area and GOCAPS in the Springfield area. These partnerships build career pathways systems for high school students. The Association believes the bill may help recruit teachers into these emerging, specialized programs.

MISSOURI NON-DISCRIMINATION ACT (MONA)

The House Judiciary Committee heard HB 485 (Dunn) and HB 846 (Razer) on April 18. Both bills would extend the Missouri Human Rights Act to apply to discrimination based upon a person's sexual orientation or gender identity. Missouri NEA believes that unfair, discriminatory treatment in employment, housing and disability should be unlawful and supports both bills.

TRUANCY

The House gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to HCS/HB 324 (Neely) on April 19. The bill would specify that no school board shall suspend a pupil for an act or acts of truancy. The HCS limits the bill to block out-of-school suspensions, while allowing in-school suspensions based on student truancy.

GIFTED EDUCATION

The House gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to HCS/HB 670 (Sommer) on April 19. The bill would require any district with a state-approved gifted education program to have a process that allows parents or guardians to appeal a determination that their child does not qualify for gifted services. The House also adopted HA 1 (Pfautsch) to add her HB 257 to require each school district to establish a policy allowing acceleration for certain students. The Association supports the bill.

HIGHER EDUCATION RETIREMENT PLAN

The House gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to HCS/HB 886 (Black) on April 19. The bill would stabilize the contribution rate of the College and University Retirement Plan (CURP), a defined contribution plan for instructional staff at four-year public institutions other than the University of Missouri. The Association supports the bill, which would help the CURP benefit remain a viable pension benefit.