



Legislative Update

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REGISTER FOR KANSAS CITY AND SOUTHEAST LEGISLATIVE FORUMS

Missouri NEA's new regional legislative events provide a chance for members to build relationships with area legislators and support their understanding of MNEA priorities and education issues. Plan to attend and invite fellow members, administrators and school board members who would enjoy and benefit from a discussion regarding support for public education!

Legislative Forum schedule:

Kansas City	April 8
Southeast Region	April 13

PLEASE REGISTER NOW for your regional MNEA Legislative Forum at

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PoliticalAction/5.aspx>

Be sure to click through the "RSVP now" link for your event and then "Send RSVP" to register. For additional information contact Sandy Smith (sandy.smith@mnea.org).

BUDGET

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to the HCS versions of HBs 1-13 (Fitzpatrick), the budget bills for the 2018 fiscal year, on April 6. The House approved HCS/HB 2 by a vote of 119-34. Relatively few amendments were adopted to HB 2, the elementary and secondary education budget bill. Rep. Fitzwater offered HA 2 to add \$500K in funding a not-for-profit for online STEM curriculum for middle school students.

The House version of HB 2 still proposes full funding of the school formula (based on the reduced funding level created with enactment of SB 586 in 2016. This represents a \$45 million increase in funding from the current year amount. The committee also recommends restoring pupil transportation funding to the current year level of \$37 million.

The House approved HCS/HB 3 by a vote of 112-44. The House version of HB 3 restores some of the Governor's proposed core cuts to higher education institutions, leaving a 6.6% cut to community colleges and four-year institutions except for a 9% cut to the UM System core budget. Rep. Hill offered HA 4 to add language specifying that college students can't be required to join a labor

organization to register for a class. Rep. Hill stated that students at St. Charles Community College were being required to join MSTA as a requirement to register for some education courses.

EDUCATION SAVINGS ACCOUNTS

The Senate debated SCS/SB 313 (Koenig) on April 4, but did not bring the bill to a vote. The bill would create a new 100% state tax credit capped at \$25 million per year for taxpayer contributions to third-party organizations that will use some of the proceeds to fund accounts that parents can use to pay private school tuition and other expenses for their students. The bill is currently limited to students with disabilities, students whose parents are active military personnel and students who are wards of the state.

The SCS disallows pupil transportation expenses from the ESA and removes eligibility for students whose parents are active military personnel. Sen. Koenig offered a SS version which is substantially similar to the SCS version.

Sen. Sifton offered SA 1, a lengthy amendment to add the provisions a previous bill pertaining to student transfers from unaccredited districts, charter schools and other topics. The bill was laid over with a substitute version of the amendment pending.

The Association opposes SB 313 and similar proposals to divert public funds to private schools not subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, staff and parents as apply to public schools.

DISCRIMINATION AND WHISTLEBLOWER

The House Special Committee on Litigation Reform heard SS#2/SCS/SB 43 (Romine) on April 3. The SS version makes several changes, including a change to the legal standard for determining that discrimination has occurred. The bill would make significant changes to the state's anti-discrimination law in employment, disability and housing. The bill also limits the state's "whistle-blower" protections. The Association believes these changes will make it harder to hold employers and their agents responsible for improper acts of discrimination. Missouri NEA believes that unfair, discriminatory treatment in the workplace should remain unlawful and opposes the bill.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT EXPENDITURES

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SB 434 (Sater) on April 6. The bill would allow school districts to allocate less than 1.0% but no less than 0.5% of moneys received under the school foundation formula to the professional development committee of the district when certain requirements are met. The Senate adopted Sen. Holsman's amendment to sunset the new language of the bill after six years. The Association is concerned that the bill weakens the state's commitment to professional development for teachers and opposes the bill.

SCHOOL FUNDING

The House Budget Committee heard HB 1132 (Christofanelli) on April 5. The bill makes a number of changes to the school funding formula:

- 1) reduces the weight of the wage-related Dollar Value Modifier (DVM) by one-third;
- 2) increases the pupil weight for Free and Reduced Price Lunch (FRPL) eligible pupils from 25% to 31% and increases the special education pupil weight from 75% to 175%;
- 3) repeals the special hold harmless provision for schools with fewer than 350 pupils; and
- 4) repeals the \$15 million grant program for small schools with fewer than 350 pupils.

While the bill makes some positive changes to pupil weights, the Association is concerned by the reductions in other provisions that would cause the bill to reduce overall school funding by an estimated \$23 million.

PREVAILING WAGE

The Senate General Laws Committee heard HB 104 (Love) on April 5. The committee also voted to approve the bill. The bill would repeal the state's prevailing wage law. The Association supports the original purpose of the prevailing wage law to ensure that public infrastructure investment supports local employment and local wage rates.

ADULT HIGH SCHOOLS

The Senate Economic Development Committee heard HB 680 (Travis Fitzwater) on April 5. The bill would establish adult high schools to be operated by a Missouri nonprofit organization.

SCHOOL RETIREMENT

The Senate Health and Pensions Committee approved an SCS version of HCS/HB 304 (Pike) on April 5. The original bill would create a divorce popup for PSRS and other school retirees, provided the divorce decree grants sole retention by the retired person of all rights in the retirement allowance.

The SCS added the provisions of SB 409 (Koenig) to create a second-tier retirement plan for the St. Louis Public School Retirement System. The bill reduces the benefit factor for new hires and for new creditable service for existing staff, increases the employee contribution rate from 5% to 9% and changes from a Rule of 85 to a Rule of 80 for retirement.

Despite the relative significance of the SLPSRS second-tier provision, the committee approved the bill as a Consent Bill. The bill will not be subject to amendment if taken up by the Senate as a Consent Bill.

HIGHER EDUCATION

The Senate debated SCS/SB 328 (Romine) on April 4, but did not bring the bill to a vote. The bill enacts several provisions relating to approval of various higher education degree programs. The Senate adopted SA 1 (Hegeman) to add his SB 62 to 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 Senate also adopted SA 2 (Munzlinger) to add his SCS/SB 188 to allow students enrolled in virtual institutions to participate in the Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program.

The House Higher Education Committee heard HB 984 (Kendrick) on April 5. The bill would create a work-study program within Department of Higher Education for students at Missouri public colleges and universities.

The House Health and Mental Health Committee heard HB 920 (Frederick) on April 5. The bill requires student counseling facilities at Missouri public colleges and universities to meet standards with respect to student-to-staff ratios, average wait time for an initial visit, and other factors established by the Department of Mental Health.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard four bills on April 4:

HCS/HB 253 (Swan) to regarding the Career and Technical Education Advisory Council. The HCS requires the council to review, update and maintain a list of offerings, including industry certifications, professional licenses and competency assessments. The Association supports the bill.

HCS/HB 441 (Corlew) to grant greater freedom for student journalists. This year's version includes anti-retaliation provisions to protect student communications sponsors and other staff from possible retaliation by boards or administration for granting students greater editorial latitude as provided by the bill. The Association supports the bill.

HB 248 (Fitzwater) to establish a statewide, online STEM career awareness program for middle school students.

HCS/HB 631 (Redmon) to revise medical endorsement requirements for school bus drivers.

The committee also approved HB 94 (Lauer) to allow students to choose to take either the ACT or ACT WorkKeys test for their state-funded ACT test. The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on April 3:

HB 141 (Spencer) to allow school districts to choose not to comply with the current requirement for expenditures for professional development in any year in which the school formula is underfunded or the Governor withholds any funds from the school funding formula. The Association is concerned that the bill weakens the state's commitment to professional development for teachers and opposes the bill.

HB 263 (Sommer) to require school districts to post certain financial information online for public access.

HB 442 (Gray) to create subdistricts for election of school board members in six districts in St. Louis County, apparently including Ferguson-Florissant, University City, Riverview Gardens, Hazelwood, Jennings and Normandy school districts. A 2016 federal court ruling found that the at-large school board member elections required in Ferguson-Florissant district by Missouri law deprived black voters of an equal opportunity to elect representatives of their choice.

HB 584 (Cookson) to require MSHSAA to report to the joint committee on education during the legislative interim.

HB 687 (Taylor) to require administration of a statewide assessment test for five years before any revisions to the test may be made.

HB 936 (Shaul) to allow PSRS retirees to work for school districts in non-teaching positions for more than 550 hours per year. The Association is concerned by the proposed financial impact of the bill on the PSRS system, as the actuarial analysis indicates that the bill could increase long-term system liability by approximately \$90 million.

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days continued on April 5 when MNEA members from Governance Districts 9 and 11, MNEA-R members and eMERGE leaders came to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days allow planned, face-to-face contact with legislators throughout the session.

For the dates that MNEA Board of Directors members selected for your Governance District and other details and contact information, please visit:

<http://www.mnea.org/Missouri/CapitolActionDays.aspx>