



# Legislative Update

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## **ACTION ALERT: PLEASE CONTACT YOUR REPRESENTATIVE CONCERNING CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION**

The House and Senate adjourned on March 29 and will reconvene on April 3 after an extended Easter weekend break. House majority party leaders have been working recently to urge caucus members to support HB 2247 (Roeber). The bill would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in many districts around the state.

The bill is likely to come up for House floor debate, perhaps as soon as next week. The Association opposes the bill and asks that you take advantage of this brief pause in the legislative action to contact your State Representative using the link below.

Legislators need to hear from education experts like you in their community about how charter school expansion will affect our students and public schools. Even a brief note in your own words can make a big difference.

Guided by the revised MNEA Position Paper on charter schools, the Association believes that charter schools should be sponsored by and accountable to the local community through the elected school board and approved only after an impact study is conducted by the district to consider the proposal. School board sponsorship ensures that the board can plan the use of all school funds and implement the services and programs that meet the needs of all students in the community.

Existing charter schools should move to district sponsorship when their charters come up for renewal. All charter schools should be subject to the same standards of accountability, transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as are applicable to traditional public schools. HB 2247 does not enact these reforms, and the Association opposes the bill.

**ACTION NEEDED:** Please call, write or use the link below to send an e-mail to urge your State Representative to oppose HB 2247.

The message can be edited and your message will have GREATER IMPACT if you add your own comments.

<http://www.capwiz.com/nea/mo/issues/alert/?alertid=80202626&type=ST>

## **HOUSE PASSES EDUCATION BUDGET BILLS**

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to the education budget bills: HB 2002 (Fitzpatrick) for K-12 education and HB 2003 (Fitzpatrick) for higher education, on March 29.

HCS/HB 2002, the K-12 education budget bill, increases K-12 formula funding by about \$46M over the Governor's recommendation, reaching the \$98M increase estimated by DESE as needed to fully fund the foundation formula for next school year. The bill does not increase funding for pupil transportation above the Governor's recommendation of \$92M. The House approved several smaller changes to funding lines, including \$250K for education costs of residential placement and \$250K for a STEM career awareness program.

In HCS/HB 2003, the higher education funding bill, the House restored core institution budgets to current year levels by reallocating the \$30M of funding that the Budget Committee had added to Access Missouri scholarship funding.

## **SENATE PERFECTS BIG TAX BILL**

The Senate gave first-round approval to SS#2/SCS/SBs 617, 611 & 667 (Eigel) on March 28. The bill could be taken up for final approval as soon as March 29.

The bill makes numerous changes to tax law, including reduction of the state individual income tax, changes to corporate income tax, creation of a state tax credit based on a portion of a taxpayers' federal Earned Income Tax Credit, enacting the Streamlined Sales and Use Tax Agreement and increasing the motor fuel tax. While the bill contains some tax law changes supported by the Association, the bill would significantly reduce the state's capacity to invest in public education and other vital services. The Association opposes the bill.

## **SO-CALLED "RIGHT-TO-WORK"**

The Senate General Laws Committee heard SJR 40 (Rowden) on March 28. The SJR contains the so-called "Right to Work" provision. If approved by voters, this constitutional amendment would remove the ability of labor unions to receive compensation for the costs of fulfilling their duties as exclusive representative. The Association opposes this effort to limit the constitutional collective bargaining rights of Missouri workers.

## **HIGHER EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL FINALLY PASSED**

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SS/SCS/HB 1465 (Cookson) on March 28. The bill modifies provisions relating to degree offerings at public institutions of higher education. The SS version makes minor changes to language regarding certain programs that are limited to being offered by certain institutions. The bill is now Truly Agreed To and will be sent to the Governor for his approval.

## **COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION**

The Senate Economic Development Committee heard HCS/HB 1623 (Fitzwater) on March 27. The committee approved an SCS version of the bill following the hearing. The SCS adds language requiring DESE to convene a task force to create a career readiness course for 8th and 9th grade students. The SCS also revises the process for developing the standards, allowing DESE to proceed without approval from the State Board of Education, which currently lacks enough members to reach a quorum or take any official action.

The bill would establish a statewide STEM career awareness program and enact several new provisions of law related to computer science. The bill requires DESE to create standards for computer science instruction, add student flexibility to count one computer science credit as either a science, math or practical art graduation credit and create a fund to support grants for teacher professional development for computer science instruction.

HB 1623 requires that students be notified of college entrance requirements for math credits and that students must still complete all required end of course exam requirements for current graduation requirements. The Association supports the provisions in the bills to create academic standards for computer science and provide support for professional development for computer science instruction.

### **SENATE PASSES COMMUNITY COLLEGE ANNEXATION BILL**

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SCS/SB 990 (Hegeman) on March 29. The bill revises the process by which a school district may be added to the territory of a community college district. Currently, a petition signed by voters in the district must be submitted to the school board of the school district, and then an election is held. The bill allows the community college board of trustees to propose attaching the school district to the community college district, levy the tax rate of the community college district in the attached district and call an election on the proposal. Election costs are borne by the community college.

### **HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The committee heard two similar bills, SB 681 (Hummel) and HB 2555 (Ruth), on March 26. Both bills require a student to 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. The Association supports the intent of both bills to ensure that all students receive the educational services they need.

The committee also voted to approve the following bills:

HCS/HB 1712 (Pfautsch) to require teacher training institutions to implement certain graduation requirements for elementary education students aimed at improving literacy in schools. The bill requires completion of additional literacy instruction.

HB 1847 (Kidd) to allow a school board to vote to exempt revenues from its operating levy from reductions by tax increment financing for redevelopment projects. The Association believes that school districts should have a more equitable voice in decisions on tax expenditures like TIFs that affect school revenues and supports the bill.

## SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on March 27:

HB 1267 (Lichtenegger) to add certain virtual institutions, including Western Governors' University, to the "Access Missouri Financial Assistance Program".

SB 709 (Schatz) to revise the process by which travel hardships are granted to public school pupils.

HB 1940 (Corlew) to grant greater freedom for student journalists. The bill 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.

The committee was also scheduled to hear SB 1077 (Holsman), but the hearing on the bill was postponed. The bill would authorize "innovation schools" in urban and metropolitan school districts. The language would allow those school districts to work with a "leadership committee" of business and civic leaders in the district to create a public "innovation school" that is exempted from many existing regulations. This new language is subject to many of the same concerns that apply to HB 2200 (Rhoads), namely weakening the normal public school standards for teacher certification, tenure rights, school retirement and salary schedules. The Association believes any such proposal must remain subject to the same standards of accountability and transparency and respect for the rights of students, parents and staff as apply to other public schools.

### **Legislative Update 2018**

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