



Legislative Update

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

Number 10
March 9, 2018
www.mnea.org

PAYCHECK AND ANTI-BARGAINING BILL

The Senate General Laws Committee approved SCS/HB 1413 (Taylor) on March 7. The bill was reported to the Senate floor on March 8, and could be taken up for debate as soon as next week.

The Association strongly opposes SCS/HB 1413. The House version of the bill requires annual authorization for payroll deduction of member dues and annual authorization for member contributions of dues or fees for political action. The bill also imposes federal-style financial reporting mandates on both statewide public unions and all affiliated local organizations, regardless of size.

The committee approved an SCS version to add the provisions of SB 602 (Onder). SB 602 imposes a number of onerous and problematic provisions relating to public union representation and collective bargaining. The bill mandates automatic recertification elections for every public sector bargaining unit, imposes numerous restrictions on bargained agreements, requires all documents in the bargaining process to be public documents and imposes an exhaustive set of financial and other record-keeping requirements on public employee unions. The Association opposes the provisions of SB 602 and opposes SCS/HB 1413.

TAX CREDIT-STYLE VOUCHERS DEBATED IN SENATE

The Senate took up SB 612 (Koenig) on March 6. Sen. Koenig offered a new Senate Substitute (SS) version of the bill, but the bill was not brought to a vote. The new SS does not include the "innovation schools" language included in the first-floor substitute.

SB 612 creates 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 certain students, including students with disabilities and students in the custody of the juvenile courts.

The Association opposes this 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.

BUDGET

The House Budget Committee reviewed the House Committee Substitutes for the budget bills, HBs 2001-2013 (Fitzpatrick), on March 7. 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 HCS does not increase funding for pupil transportation above the Governor's recommendation of \$92M.

In HCS/HB 2003, the higher education funding bill, the committee restored 4.2% of the core cuts to the public colleges and universities and increased funding for Access Missouri, the primary need-based scholarship program for college students, by \$30M over the Governor's recommendation.

COMPUTER SCIENCE INSTRUCTION BILLS

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to HCS/HB 1623 (Fitzwater) on March 8. The Senate also gave final approval to SS/SCS/SBs 894 and 921 (Libla), a similar bill, on the same day. The bills would establish a statewide STEM career awareness program and enact several new provisions of law related to computer science. The bills also require creation of a work group 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. SB 894 contains similar language. 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.

WORKING AFTER RETIREMENT

The Senate Health and Pensions Committee heard SB 1045 (Romine) on March 7. The bill allows a retired PSRS teacher to work in a position covered by PEERS for more than 550 hours in such a position without losing eligibility to receive their PSRS pension, provided that the person earns less than half the minimum teacher's salary (\$12,500 per year). The Association supports the bill.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on March 5:

HB 1363 (Kidd) to require teachers and principals to complete two hours of suicide prevention education each school year.

HB 1493 (Wood) to requires school districts to recognize certain graduate and undergraduate hours as equivalent to a master's degree on the salary schedule.

The committee also voted to approve the following bills:

HB 1348 (Black) to specify that DESE shall handle funds from career and technical student organizations.

HCS/HB 1435 (Sommer) to require districts with a sufficient number of children determined to be gifted to establish special programs for the gifted children. The Association supports the bill.

HCS/HB 2129 (Cookson) to require each student to have thirty minutes of instruction regarding decisions on organ donation during high school. The HCS makes technical wording changes. The Association supports the bill.

HB 2192 (Redmon) to modify the bonding requirement for the treasurer of a seven-director school district.

HCS/HB 2411 (Pike) to create new provisions relating to school librarians. The HCS removes the requirement for districts to establish library and media programs. The Association believes that all students and staff should have the benefits of a comprehensive library and media program and supports the bill.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on March 6:

HB 1408 (Spencer) to establish a new course access program by revising the current MoVIP. The Association believes that virtual courses can play an important role for schools and students, and supports the bill.

HCS/HB 1606 (Gannon) to provide financial aid for first time test takers of the HISET high school equivalency exam. The Association supports the bill.

HB 1744 (Hansen) to modify the A+ Schools Program by removing the requirement that the student's attendance of public high school occur in the three years immediately prior to graduation. The Association supports the bill.

SB 687 (Sater) to 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 Association is concerned that the bill weakens the state's commitment to professional development for teachers and opposes the bill.

SB 838 (Rowden) to revise provisions regarding school bus driver background checks and allow school districts to contract with cities to use excess bus capacity for pupil transportation.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve the following bills:

HB 1665 (Swan) to authorize the granting of a visiting scholars certificate to teachers in public schools. The Association supports the bill.

SCS/HB 1465 (Cookson) to modify provisions relating to degree offerings at public institutions of higher education.

SCS/SB 949 (Emery) to repeal existing programs and establish a new reading intervention program for students in kindergarten to third grade. The SCS removes the requirement that would make grade level promotion for certain students contingent on passing a reading examination.

SCS/SB 990 (Hegeman) to revise the process by which a school district is added to the territory of a community college district.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 2412 (Corlew) on March 7. The bill expands the A+ program to dual enrollment students earning college credit in high school. Eligible A+ students may receive reimbursement for the cost of tuition, books, and fees for any dual-credit or dual-enrollment course offered in association with a public community college or vocational or technical school. The Association supports the bill.

The committee also approved the following bills on March 7:

HB 1520 (Cookson) to raise the state minimum teacher salary from \$25,000 to \$30,000 and raise the minimum salary for 10 years of experience plus a masters degree from \$32,000 to \$35,000. Both increases are subject to appropriation.

HB 1811 (Smith) to require a higher education institution to disclose its unaccredited status to students before enrollment.

HCS/HB 2348 (Davis) to change the cap on tuition charged at public institutions of higher education. The bill would give institutions more flexibility to adjust tuition to maintain program quality and opportunities for students in an era of declining state funding. The Association supports the bill.

HB 2360 - Redmon) to add several professions, including air ambulance pilots, air ambulance registered professional nurses, air ambulance registered respiratory therapists, uniformed employees of the Office of the State Fire Marshal, and their children and spouses, and certain emergency medical technicians and their children and spouses to the list of those eligible to receive a public safety officer or employee survivor grant.

Legislative Update 2018

Missouri National Education Association
1810 East Elm Street
Jefferson City, MO 65101-4174
(573) 634-3202 or (800) 392-0236
www.mnea.org

Charles E. Smith, President
DeeAnn Aull, Executive Director
Otto Fajen, Legislative Director
Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant