



Legislative Update

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www.mnea.org

ACTION ALERT - ASK YOUR LEGISLATORS TO OPPOSE CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION BILLS

The House was widely expected to take up HCS/HB 581 (Roeber) on March 6. However, legislative action can be unpredictable, and the bill was not taken up. The bill was placed on the informal calendar and is expected to be taken up next week before the House leaves for Spring Break on March 14.

SCS/SB 292 (Eigel) is on the Senate calendar and could also be taken up next week. The two bills are substantially the same and would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in districts around the state. The Association strongly opposes both SCS/SB 292 and HCS/HB 581.

ACTION NEEDED: PLEASE CALL, WRITE OR USE THE LINK BELOW to send an e-mail to urge your State Senator and State Representative to oppose the charter school expansion bills.

The message can be edited, and your message will have GREATER IMPACT if you add your own comments. This message is hosted on Action Network, which the Association now uses for Legislative Forum registration and other advocacy actions.

https://actionnetwork.org/letters/hcshb-581-charter-school-campaign-feb-2019?source=direct_link&

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days continued March 6 when members from Governance Districts 7 & 8 came to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days will continue through the end of session in May.

PLEASE NOTE THE LOCATION CHANGE: MEET AT MNEA HEADQUARTERS AT 10 A.M. FOR THE BRIEFING!

For details and contact information, please visit:

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

ST. LOUIS LEGISLATIVE FORUM

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events for 2019 conclude with the St. Louis Legislative Forum on March 7. These free events provide a chance for members to build relationships with area legislators and support their understanding of MNEA priorities and education issues.

For more information, go to:

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

BUDGET

The House Budget Committee released committee markup sheets for the operating budget bills, HBs 1-13 (Smith) and worked through review of those changes on March 6. The committee will complete the formal markup process to finalize the HCS versions of the bills on March 11.

The committee markup sheets remove \$100M in general revenue funds from various parts of the budget and moved the funding to the State Road Fund to fund road and bridge work. This signals that the House is not likely to support the Governor's bonding proposal for road funding. Among the reductions made to support this transfer was a \$5M reduction to pupil transportation, reducing the Governor's proposed \$10M increase to \$5M.

The committee markup sheets increase several line items in HB 2 for K-12 funding, including: \$150K for K-3 reading assessment, \$150K for Missouri Scholars Academy, \$700K for school safety grants and \$500K for independent living centers. The committee made the following decreases in HB 2: \$300K for new computer science education funding and \$829K in new funding for first-time HiSET high school equivalency test takers.

The committee is proposing to add a \$4.685M equity adjustment line for Missouri State University. The \$16.3M in one-time funding for community colleges will be separated out into individual lines with institution specific amounts and the \$9M in deferred maintenance for four-year institutions will be separated out by language to provide \$1M to each institution.

SCHOOL START DATE

The House gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to HCS/HBs 161 and 401 (Knight) on March 6 by a vote of 86-64. With the adoption of HA 1 (Pollitt), the bill mandates that school districts start school no earlier than fourteen calendar days prior to the first Monday in September. The Association believes that school calendars should be locally determined and opposes the bill.

CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS

The House General Laws Committee heard HB 258 (Taylor) on March 6. The bill would take away local control of college and university governing boards to regulate concealed weapons on campus and allow any person, including students and staff, with a concealed carry permit to carry concealed weapons on campus. The Association believes that all students and education employees should be allowed to learn and work in a safe environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons and opposes the bill.

SCHOOL FUNDING FORMULA AND TRANSFERS

The House Budget Committee heard HB 465 (Wood) on March 7. The bill makes several changes to the parameters of the school funding formula. Perhaps the most significant change is to begin to move the local revenue deduction forward in time from the current 2004 base year. The bill would have a delayed effect on funding changes. The bill also enacts a broad transfer option applicable to all districts, including a tuition cap for sending districts and the ability for receiving districts to determine available capacity to receive transfer students. The hearing was primarily for informational purposes to educate the committee members on the current formula and some possible changes to the formula.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on March 5:

SB 205 (Arthur) to allow A+ Schools scholarship to cover dual credit or dual enrollment for qualifying high schoolers. 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 bill adds a requirement that participating high schools demonstrate a commitment to ensure that all students earn credits towards any type of college degree while in high school. The Association supports the bill.

SB 314 (Burlison) to prohibit institutions of higher learning from discriminating against a religious student organization.

SB 358 (Sater) to revise the Health Professional Student Loan Repayment Program. The Association believes the bill will help create additional capacity of mental health service providers in areas of critical need around the state and supports the bill.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve SCS/SB 265 (Luetkemeyer) on March 5. The bill replaces the student representative on the Board of Curators of the University of Missouri with a student curator.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on March 5:

HB 606 (Basye) to allow school districts to contract with municipal bus programs to transport pupils.

HB 857 (Deaton) to allow home school students to participate in activities sponsored by a statewide activities association for the public school district in they reside. The Association asks that decisions regarding student participation in activities continue to be made by the member schools that make up and operate these voluntary associations.

The committee voted to approve three bills on March 5:

1) HB 485 (Dogan) to require the State Board of Education to modify accreditation standards for special school districts. The bill attempts to ensure that accreditation standards applied to special school districts are those that are applicable to a student population consisting entirely of students with an identified disability.

2) HCS/HB 924 (Razer) to revise certain specifications relating to charter schools. The bill was approved by a vote of 7-6. The bill does not expand charter schools, nor does it shift sponsorship solely to the local school board, as proposed by the MNEA Position Paper. The bill makes some revisions to the specific circumstances when a charter school should be closed. The Association continues to urge that the charter school law be revised in the manner described in the MNEA Position Paper on Charter Schools.

3) HCS/HB 739 (Miller) to revise provisions relating to preventing sexual misconduct in schools. The bill requires school districts to check with prior school employers regarding employee conduct. The HCS contains language to ensure that any determination of an employee violation of board policy referenced in the bill would be made after the opportunity for a due process hearing.

HOUSE SPECIAL COMMITTEE ON STUDENT ACCOUNTABILITY

The committee began the hearing on HB 464 (Kelley), but did not finish the hearing. The hearing will be continued next week. The bill would revise existing laws regarding reading intervention programs and establish a new reading intervention program for students in kindergarten to fourth grade. The Association believes that key decisions about assessment, placement, additional instruction and advancement should remain at the local level with district, employee, parent and student input.

The committee was scheduled to hear HB 33 (Stacy) on March 5, but the hearing was not held. The bill would authorize state tax credits to divert state general revenue sources to fund special education scholarships to non-public schools for K-12 students. The Association continues to oppose diversion of public funds to third-party bureaucracies or to private and home schools that are not subject to public school standards.

The committee voted to approve HB 112 (Sommer) on March 5. The bill would require a district to establish a gifted education program if three percent or more are identified as gifted. The Association believes that gifted and talented students need a challenging curriculum and a program that identifies and supports their unique needs. The Association supports the bill.

The committee voted not to approve HB 476 (Bailey). The bill was defeated on a 3-7 vote. The bill would authorize state appropriations of state general revenue to fund special education scholarships to non-public schools for K-12 students. The Association continues to oppose diversion of public funds to third-party bureaucracies or to private and home schools that are not subject to public school standards.

TEACHER EXTERNSHIPS

The House voted to send HCS/HB 462 (Shields) back to the House Rules - Legislative Oversight Committee. This move was apparently based on the fiscal impact of the tax credit in the bill. The bill will be reconsidered by that Rules committee and could be sent back to the committee of origin. The bill would increase opportunities for teacher externships. The bill creates a 50% tax credit for business costs incurred for supporting teacher externships and gives teachers credit for externships on teacher salary schedules. The HCS requires the teacher to still be employed with a school district in December of the first year the tax credit is claimed and sunsets the program after five years. The House adopted HA 1 (Shields) that makes the tax credit subject to appropriation. The Association believes the bill would support and respect teacher participation in business externships that can have a beneficial impact for students.

NOTICE OF CHANGE IN CUSTODY

The House General Laws Committee heard HB 745 (Ruth) on March 4. The bill requires courts to notify school administrators of any change in a child's custody within one business day of the change, and for the school to acknowledge the change notification within one business day. If the specific process can be worked out, this provision would help ensure timely notice to schools of any change in who is allowed to pick up a student from school.

TAX LEVY ELECTION DATE

The House Downsizing State Government Committee approved HCS/HJR 19 (Christofanelli) on March 4. The HJR would require any state or local election to approve a new tax or increase an existing tax to occur on a general (November) election date. The Association opposes this limitation on the approval of local ballot issues. Municipal election dates are the usual time for local communities to focus on school board and school levy elections.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 753 (Kelley) on March 4. The bill would replace the student representative on the Board of Curators of the University of Missouri with a student curator.

The committee also voted to approve HB 575 (Dohrman). The bill describes a process by which institutions of higher education may designate one or more faculty or staff members as campus protection officers and allow them to carry concealed firearms. The Association believes that all students and education employees should be allowed to learn and work in a safe environment free of unauthorized guns and other deadly weapons.

SENATE GOVERNMENT REFORM COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on March 5:

SB 271 (Emery) to transfer the authority to regulate charter schools from the State Board of Education and DESE to the Missouri Charter Public School Commission. The bill purports to essentially create a separate and competing system of publicly funded schools that are accountable to neither local school boards nor the State Board of Education. The Association believes that all public schools should be accountable to the locally elected school board. Public schools should be supervised by the State Board of Education as provided in the Missouri Constitution, and the Association opposes the bill.

SB 349 (O'Laughlin) to revise existing laws regarding reading intervention programs and establish a new reading intervention program for students in kindergarten to fourth grade. The bill is substantially similar to the sponsor's SB 73, a bill heard earlier this session in the Senate Education Committee. The bill removes the requirement that would make grade level promotion for certain students contingent on passing a reading examination. However, the Association is concerned that the bill is overly prescriptive regarding the interventions required to be in an intervention plan and opposes the bill. The Association believes that key decisions about assessment, placement, additional instruction and advancement should remain at the local level with district, employee, parent and student input.

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