



Legislative Update

By Otto Fajen
MNEA Legislative Director
Otto.fajen@mnea.org

Number 2
January 16, 2020
www.mnea.org

STATE OF THE STATE ADDRESS

Governor Mike Parson delivered the State of the State Address to a joint session of the House and Senate in the House Chamber on January 15. The State of the State address gives the Governor a chance to present his vision for the state and his budget priorities. Governor Parson again focused on workforce development and infrastructure.

Regarding education, the Governor encouraged an effort to increase teacher pay, but suggested that this should primarily come from local school leadership and resources and did not propose additional state aid for that purpose. Governor Parson also mentioned a priority for greater access to virtual education for high school students.

The Governor's budget recommendations for FY 2020-21 include several increases for K-12 public education, including:

- \$10 million for the basic equity funding formula, which will provide full funding for next year based on the most recent DESE estimate,
- \$10 million for transportation services, and
- \$12 million for the Early Childhood Special Education program.

The Governor's budget recommendations for FY 2020-21 keep aid to colleges and universities approximately level with the current year.

The Governor also recommends several increases for higher education, including:

- \$4.8 million for the A+ scholarship program,
- \$4.4 million for the newly-created Fast Track program to provide grants to students over age 25 years with household incomes under \$80,000 working on degree programs that fill high-needs skills gaps, and
- \$19.6 million for the newly-created Missouri Excels program, a program for Missouri higher education institutions to develop and expand employer-driven education, training programs, and initiatives to increase career readiness.

MNEA remains hopeful that the Governor and legislature can work together to fulfill the promise of a quality education for all Missouri students, regardless of where they live.

ATTACKS ON THE REFORMS OF CLEAN MISSOURI

Missourians voted overwhelmingly to support the reforms in Amendment 1. Missouri NEA made the passage of Amendment 1 a top priority in the November 2018 election. The Association also made defending the reforms of CLEAN Missouri a top priority of its legislative advocacy in the 2019 session.

HCS/HJR 48 from 2019 would have undone the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1, but the measure did not pass due to a procedural mistake in the Senate committee during the last week of session. The Association opposed HJR 48.

Majority party legislators are already moving a similar provision through the legislature this session. The Senate Rules, Joint Rules, Resolutions, and Ethics Committee heard SJR 38 (Hegeman) on January 14. SJR 38, if approved by voters, would also reverse the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1. The Association opposes SJR 38.

APPROPRIATIONS

The House Appropriations - Education Committee met on January 13 to hear testimony from higher education institution presidents and fiscal officers. The committee also heard a presentation from the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development. The presentation provided an organizational overview of the various programs of the Department. The Senate Appropriations Committee met on January 15 to begin hearing public testimony regarding the state budget.

MORE TAX CUTS

The Senate Ways and Means Committee heard SB 574 (Eigel) regarding taxation on January 14. While the bill makes several changes to tax policy, the Association is particularly concerned that the bill would enact an additional and significant cut to the state personal income tax rate. This change would reduce the state income tax rate an additional 0.3%, resulting in an eventual top rate of 4.8%. This income tax cut will ultimately reduce state revenues by \$281 million per year. Offsetting increases from a private university endowment tax would leave a net cut of \$129 million per year from SB 574. This cut will further reduce state revenues and leave the state without the capacity to adequately invest in public education and other vital services.

TAX INCREMENT FINANCE (TIF) REFORM

The Senate Ways and Means Committee heard SB 570 (Koenig) on January 14. The bill makes several changes regarding tax increment finance (TIF) projects. The Association supports this effort to improve TIF regulations by better defining and focusing the situations where TIFs can apply and ensuring a third party does the evaluation of whether the proposed project meets those definitions, rather than the developers.

PROPERTY ASSESSMENTS

The House Ways and Means Committee heard several bills and joint resolutions on the topic of property assessments on January 15.

HJR 77 (Eggleston) would ask voters to remove the requirement for uniformity of assessments and allow the legislature to pass laws to restrict assessments below true value based on the amount of increase from the previous assessment. The Association is concerned that HJR 77 overturns longstanding constitutional principles of uniformity and fairness of assessment and would adversely affect local school revenues in the long run. HJR 77 would also make Kansas City's constitutionally established tax rate subject to statutory roll back provisions. The Association opposes HJR 77.

HB 1710 (Eggleston) is a companion implementing bill for HJR 77 that makes several changes, including imposing a 10% cap on the increase of assessment of any residential real property (except for new construction and improvements). The Association went on record in opposition to HB 1710.

The committee began the hearing on HB 1894 (Schroer), but the hearing was not completed and will be continued next week. The bill would create a presumption that any residential property assessment increase over 3% is in error and places the burden of proof on the assessor to show sufficient evidence that the assessment is correct.

The committee also heard HJR 78 (Eggleston). This joint resolution requires all county assessors to be elected but makes no changes to assessment determinations.

The following measures were scheduled for hearing, but the hearings were postponed:

HJR 85 (Coleman) to ask voters to remove the requirement for uniformity of assessments and allow the legislature to restrict assessment below true value based on the amount of increase from the previous assessment.

HB 1860 (Coleman) to automatically define the assessed value of residential properties as the prior value plus the current inflation adjustment or the sale price if the property was sold since the last assessment.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard three bills on January 14:

- 1) HB 1540 (Basye) to require all school districts to permit recording of IEP or Section 504 meetings by a student's parent or legal guardian. The bill allows district policies to require up to 24-hour notice from parents prior to making such recordings.
- 2) HB 1559 (Remole) to exempt private religious schools from the state minimum wage law requirements. Public schools are currently exempt from the state minimum wage law.
- 3) HB 1568 (Bailey) to modify provisions relating to seclusion and restraint policies in public schools. The bill defines seclusion and restraint, requires parental notice if either seclusion or restraint is used on a student and contains extensive reporting requirements on the incident. The Association will work to ensure that any such bill allows school boards to maintain a policy that respects the safety and dignity of both students and staff.

HOUSE PENSIONS COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 1934 (Wiemann) on January 14. The bill would revise law pertaining to PSRS/PEERS by allowing the salaries and benefits of the PSRS/PEERS System Executive Director and staff to become public information.

REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND YOUR MNEA LEGISLATIVE FORUM!

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events will continue in 2020. These free events will be legislative discussion panels. As in previous years, these 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 Regional Legislative Forum	January 30
St. Louis Legislative Forum	February 13
Jefferson County/Southeast Legislative Forum	February 27
Mid-Missouri Legislative Forum	March 5

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).

USEFUL LINKS

MNEA Issues and Action:

<http://www.mnea.org/Missouri/Issues-Action.aspx>

MNEA Legislative Action Center:

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

MNEA Education Advocates Program (includes signup):

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PoliticalActionProgram.aspx>

MNEA Legislative Forums (includes signup):

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

MNEA Capitol Action Days (includes signup):

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

MNEA Legislative Updates (includes signup):

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/StateLegislativeUpdates.aspx>

MNEA Legislative Platform and Priorities:

<https://www.mnea.org/Missouri/PlatformPriorities.aspx>

MNEA App:

<http://www.mnea.org/Missouri/News/Download-the-Missouri-NEA-Mobile-App-Today-413.aspx>

Legislative Update 2020

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

Phil Murray, President
DeeAnn Aull, Executive Director
Otto Fajen, Legislative Director
Sandy Smith, Administrative Assistant