



# Legislative Update

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[www.mnea.org](http://www.mnea.org)

## REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND YOUR REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM!

Missouri NEA's regional legislative events continue with the St. Louis Legislative Forum on February 13. These free events will 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:

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](mailto:sandy.smith@mnea.org)).

### CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days began for 2020 on February 12 when members from Governance Districts 2 and 10 came to the Capitol. Capitol Action Days allow planned, face-to-face contact with legislators throughout the session. Capitol Action Days will generally be on Wednesdays through most of the remaining weeks of session.

To register for the Capitol Action Day for your Governance District or to find details and contact information, please visit:

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

If you are not able to attend on your scheduled day, feel free to register to attend a different Capitol Action Day. Each Capitol Action Day will start with a briefing at 10 am at the MNEA HQ to provide you with the most up-to-date information.

## **SENATE PASSES ATTACK ON THE REFORMS OF CLEAN MISSOURI**

The Senate gave final approval (Third Reading vote) to SS#3/SJR 38 (Hegeman) on February 10 by a nearly party-line vote of 22-9. Sen. Lincoln Hough was the only majority party Senator to vote against the measure. SJR 38 is similar to HJR 76 and HJR 101 and would undermine the redistricting reforms of Amendment 1, also known as CLEAN Missouri. The SS#3 still removes the nonpartisan demographer created under Amendment 1 and opens the possibility for the population count to be skewed to exclude non-citizen or non-voting-age residents from the data used for drawing districts. The SJR also makes it harder to file suit against a faulty map and limits the remedies available to a judge in such a case. The Association strongly opposes SJR 38.

## **CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION**

Two charter school expansion bills have been approved by Senate committees and could be taken up soon for Senate debate. The Senate Government Reform Committee approved SCS/SB 603 (O'Laughlin) on February 3 and the Senate General Laws Committee approved SB 649 (Eigel) on January 28. The bills have roughly similar provisions regarding expansion of charter schools. Both bills would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in districts around the state.

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. Existing charter schools should move to district sponsorship when their charters come up for renewal. 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. SB 603 and SB 649 do not enact these reforms, and the Association opposes both bills.

## **TAX CREDIT VOUCHERS**

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee heard HB 1733 (Christofanelli) on February 11. The bill is a tax credit voucher proposal. The Senate Education Committee will hear SB 707 (Koenig), a similar bill, on February 18. The bills would create a tax credit for contributions to largely unaccountable third party "scholarship organizations" that would hand out scholarships that allow a student to attend a private or home school or pay tuition to a different school district or a charter school. The Association continues to vigorously oppose diversion of public funds to unaccountable third-party bureaucracies or to private and home schools that are not subject to public school standards.

## **FUNDING FOR CHARTER SCHOOLS**

The House Budget Committee approved HCS/HB 1664 (Richey) on February 4. The bill revises the law specifying payments to charter schools. The Association remains concerned regarding the wording of the bill and also urges the legislature to provide an allowance in the calculation for maintaining district capacity to serve all students. The Association also urges the legislature to fix the broken charter school law. 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. 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.

### **CONCEALED WEAPONS ON CAMPUS**

The Senate Transportation, Infrastructure and Public Safety Committee heard SB 663 (Burlison) on February 13. The bill would take away local control of college and university governing boards to regulate 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.

### **POLICIES ON SECLUSION AND RESTRAINT**

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee reconsidered HB 1568 (Bailey) on February 13 and approved a new HCS version of the bill. The bill revises the requirements for seclusion and restraint policies in public schools. The bill had been sent back to the committee of origin by the House Rules - Administrative Oversight Committee to correct many concerns raised regarding the bill, including the concerns raised by the Association.

The new HCS appears to address these concerns. The bill defines seclusion and restraint, requires parental notice if either seclusion or restraint is used on a student and contains reporting requirements on the incident. The new HCS simplifies the notice and reporting requirements and removes other problematic language. The Association will continue to monitor the progress of the bill to ensure that it allows school boards to maintain a policy that respects the safety and dignity of both students and staff.

### **RESTRICTING ADVOCACY OF PUBLIC OFFICIALS AND PUBLIC EMPLOYEES**

The House Rules - Administrative Oversight Committee sent HCS/HB 1347 (Baker) back to the committee of origin on February 13. The Association opposes the bill and supports the Rules Committee decision to send the bill back to the House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee to be rewritten. The bill would change the restrictions on expenditure of public funds to support or oppose candidates and certain measures. The bill also attempts to restrict the ability of local public officials and school employees and other public employees to testify for or against a bill pending before the legislature. Rep. Dogan offered an amendment to remove the restrictions regarding testimony before the legislature, but the amendment was defeated by a vote of 6-7. The Association believes this bill violates the free speech rights of school employees and other public employees and opposes the bill.

### **HOUSE PERFECTS GIFTED EDUCATION BILL**

The House gave first round approval (Perfection vote) to HB 1317 (Sommer) on February 12. The bill requires districts to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The Association supports this portion of the bill. The House adopted HA 2 (Sommer) to delay the effective date for the new requirements to identify and serve gifted students to give time for more teachers to seek

certification as gifted teachers. The House also adopted HA 4 (Morgan) to extend the requirements for serving gifted students to also apply to charter schools.

The House also adopted HA 3 (Basye) to add the provisions of his HCS/HB 1540 (Basye). HB 1540 requires all school districts to permit audio 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. HB 1540 also includes whistleblower provisions designed to protect staff involved in IEP meetings.

## **SCHOOL RETIREMENT SYSTEM INFORMATION**

The House gave final approval to HB 1934 (Wiemann) on February 10. 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.

## **STUDENT NEWSPAPERS**

The House Special Committee on Career Readiness heard HB 2317 (Christofanelli) on February 12. The bill grants 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.

## **SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

Senate Pro Tem David Schatz recently appointed Sen. Cindy O'Laughlin as Chairwoman of the Senate Education Committee to replace Sen. Gary Romine after he resigned his seat to accept an appointment to the State Tax Commission.

The committee heard two bills on February 11:

SB 642 (Onder) to prohibit public institutions of higher education from offering in-state tuition to any undocumented student. The Association believes that a Missouri high school diploma or high school equivalency credential should provide documentation for undocumented students for verification of in-state tuition status. The Association opposes the bill.

SB 645 (Hoskins) to require districts to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The Association supports the bill.

## **HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE**

The committee heard HB 2220 (Dohrman) on February 10. The bill would allow high school students with medium to low family income to get a scholarship for dual credit courses taken as part of a "STEM studies enhancement program". This is defined as an undergraduate program offered by a Missouri higher education institution to high school students that emphasizes applied, advanced skills in a field related to STEM.

The committee also approved HCS/HB 2151 (Swan). The bill would allow Southeast Missouri State University to develop a statewide mission in visual and performing arts, computer science and cybersecurity.

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

In addition to HB 1733, the committee also heard HB 1483 (Rehder) on February 11. The bill would require adult students to undergo background checks before attending certain classes in public schools.

The committee voted to approve four bills heard last week:

HCS/HB 1682 (Wood) to prohibit vapor product usage in indoor areas of public schools or on school buses. This law already applies to the use of any tobacco or tobacco products in those areas. The HCS version removes the criminal penalty portion of the bill but still prohibits both smoking and vaping in indoor areas of public schools or school buses. The Association believes that all educational facilities must be smoke-free and safe from all environmental and chemical hazards. The Association supports the bill.

HCS/HB 1808 (Wood) to requires DESE to revise health or physical education standards to include instruction on the use and effects of vapor products along with instruction on the use and effects of tobacco products. The Missouri NEA believes that substance abuse negatively impacts all children and supports improved educational programs about tobacco and other similar products.

HCS/HB 1817 (Dinkins) to exclude certain administrative penalties from the calculation of local effort in Iron County.

HB 1818 (Dinkins) to removes increases in the amount received from fines for school purposes from the calculation of local effort for all school districts.

## **PROFESSIONAL LICENSES**

The Senate General Laws Committee heard SB 647 (Koenig) on February 11. The bill would revise laws pertaining to state licensing authorities. The bill allows licensing authorities to disqualify a person from a professional license for a prior conviction of a crime only if the crime for which the person was convicted directly relates to the duties and responsibilities for the licensed occupation. Licensing boards could no longer use vague and general terms such as "moral turpitude" for disqualification, and disqualification for an offense shall not last longer than five years, except for violent or sexual offenses. The bill appears to pertain primarily to occupations and professions regulated by the Division of Professional Registration. The Association believes this policy could also benefit teacher recruitment and retention.

## **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**

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