



Legislative Update

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

Number 7
February 21, 2020
www.mnea.org

CHARTER SCHOOL EXPANSION

The Senate debated SB 525 (Emery) on February 19, but did not bring the bill to a vote. SB 525 would allow a drug recovery charter school to be established in Kansas City. The bill would give the school the ability to enroll non-resident pupils from other districts. The Association is concerned that such a program may be better established as a traditional public school due to issues with the current charter law.

The Senate has not yet debated SB 649 (Eigel). This broader charter school expansion bill would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in districts around the state. Senate debate on this charter expansion bill is still likely to happen soon.

The Association strongly opposes SB 649.

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

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/stop-charter-school-expansion?source=direct_link&

Guided by the 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 649 does not enact these reforms, and the Association strongly opposes the bill.

REGISTER NOW TO ATTEND YOUR REGIONAL LEGISLATIVE FORUM!

Missouri NEA's regional legislative 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:

Jefferson County/Southeast Legislative Forum
Mid-Missouri Legislative Forum

February 27
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).

CAPITOL ACTION DAYS

MNEA Capitol Action Days continued on February 19 when members from Governance District 1 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.

ATTACKS 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.

PAYCHECK DECEPTION

The Senate General Laws Committee heard SB 701 (Onder) on February 18. HB 1413 from 2018, the anti-bargaining bill, was blocked by permanent court injunction resulting from a lawsuit filed by the Association and other public labor organizations. This permanent injunction strongly affirms public employees' constitutional right to bargain and their right to join the association of their choosing. Despite this court ruling, SB 701 would attempt to enact even more onerous and intrusive restrictions

on certain public employees regarding payroll deductions for dues and deductions for political action. The Association strongly opposes the bill.

TAX CREDIT VOUCHERS

The Senate Education Committee heard SB 707 (Koenig) on February 18. The bill would create a tax credit voucher proposal. The bill 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.

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee heard HB 2068 (Fitzwater) on February 18. The bill would create a tax credit voucher program for low and middle income students that would be housed in the State Treasurer's Office. The bill has relatively few details about how the program would operate and contains essentially no requirements on the private schools that might receive funding under the measure. The Association believes that private school option plans compromise free, equitable, universal and quality public education for every student and opposes the bill.

The House committee voted to approve HB 1733 (Christofanelli) on February 18, yet another bill to create a tax credit voucher proposal. HB 1733 is very similar to SB 707. The Association opposes the bill.

INITIATIVE PETITION PROCESS

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee heard HJR 102 (Simmons) on February 19. HJR 102 is another joint resolution to make it harder for citizens to use the initiative petition process. HJR 102 would require an initiative petition amending the Constitution to have at least 8% of voters signing the petition in each of two-thirds of the State Representative districts and then require a two-thirds vote for the proposal to be adopted. These requirements would make an already difficult task much harder to complete. The Association opposes HJR 102 and believes the measure would make it harder and more costly for citizens to bring forward and approve relevant policies through the initiative process.

HOUSE PASSES GIFTED EDUCATION

The House gave final approval to HB 1317 (Sommer) on February 17. The bill requires districts to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The Association supports this portion of the bill. The bill delays 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 bill extends these requirements for serving gifted students to also apply to charter schools.

The bill also includes the provisions of 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.

CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION

The House perfected HCS/HB 1868 (Swan) on February 19. The bill requires the State Board of Education to develop a statewide plan for career and technical education that matches workforce needs with appropriate educational resources.

STUDENT NEWSPAPERS

The House Special Committee on Career Readiness approved HB 2317 (Christofanelli) on February 19. 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.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

In addition to HB 2068, the committee heard the following bills on February 18:

HB 1345 (Baker) regarding elective social studies courses on the Hebrew Scriptures and the New Testament in public schools. The bill is similar to HB 267 from last session and contains permissive language that purports to allow schools to offer such elective courses.

HB 1820 (Kelley) to enact requirements relating to suicide prevention education and information. Districts are required to offer two hours of professional development and teachers are required to participate in the training or to review materials on their own. The Association is concerned regarding the continuing trend of additional state requirements for professional development.

HB 1961 (Schroer) to require every school to maintain an armed officer at all times during the school day at every school site. The Association believes that arming educators as a method of school security or violence prevention increases the risk of potential violence and accidental shootings endangering all stakeholders. The Association opposes the bill.

In addition to HB 1733, the committee approved HB 1483 (Rehder) on February 18. The bill requires adult students to undergo background checks before attending certain classes in public schools.

HOME SCHOOL PARTICIPATION IN ACTIVITIES

The House Downsizing State Government Committee heard HB 2273 (Deaton) on February 17. The bill would require MSHSAA to allow home school students to participate in activities or member schools will lose state funding. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies that govern student activities.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard HB 1796 (Hicks) on February 17. The bill changes the law regarding the Missouri Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) Fund.

The committee also approved HB 2220 (Dohrman) on February 17. 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.

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