



Legislative Update

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BUDGET BILLS IN CONFERENCE

The House and Senate agreed to meet in conference to resolve differences in next year's budget bills. Both chambers must complete action on the bills by 6 p.m. on May 6.

The Senate made many significant changes and additions to HB 3002 on K-12 funding, including:

\$214.5M in added funding to fully fund K-12 pupil transportation,
\$31.7M for teacher pay based on the Governor's original proposal but with \$10M added,
\$25M for literacy grants to schools to support SB 681 (O'Laughlin) on reading instruction and intervention,
\$2M for grants for competency-based education programs.

The Senate version includes the same \$37M for Career Ladder as the House position. The Senate version also restores the broad authorizations for federal ESSER II and ESSER III funds and removes the House language to redirect a total of \$75 million to a proposed, new tutoring grant program through a third party selected by DESE.

The Senate committee agreed with the House position for additional maintenance and repair funding and a 5.4% CPI increase for state aid to all community colleges, four-year public institutions and the state technical college. The Senate committee also includes increases to student aid programs, including \$3.5M for Bright Flight, \$4.5M to Access Missouri, \$6M for A+ Schools and \$7M for a revised Dual Credit scholarship program for low-income students.

SENATE LOADS UP LOCAL GOVERNMENT BILL

The Senate debated HB 1606 (McGaugh) on April 27 and adopted many amendments. The Senate approved Sen. Eigel's SA 1 to add his SB 649 to eliminate personal property taxes in schools and other taxing jurisdictions in St. Charles County. The Senate also adopted Sen. Eigel's SA 11 to include his SB 1034. That provision requires school districts in St. Charles County to seek reapproval of any bond issue if the actual construction costs exceed the original proposal by more than 10%. The Association opposes both of these amendments that were added to the bill.

Sen. Onder offered an amendment to offer his SB 1023 to limit powers of public health agencies, local governments and school districts in dealing with COVID-19, but the amendment was withdrawn. Sen. Moon offered an amendment to add his SB 781 to ban trans athlete participation in elementary and secondary schools, but the amendment was withdrawn. The Association also opposed these amendments that were offered and withdrawn.

After amending and adopting the Senate Substitute, the bill was referred to the Senate Committee on Governmental Accountability and Fiscal Oversight (GAFO). If heard and approved by GAFO, the bill can taken up for a final vote.

HONESTY IN EDUCATION

The Senate Education Committee heard and later voted to approve HCS/HB 1858 (Baker) on April 26. No changes were made to the bill by the committee. The bill has been reported to the floor and will be placed on the calendar for debate. The original bill pertains to parental rights and information access in education. An individual or the AG may seek an injunction to withhold state aid of a district in violation of the bill. The House version of the bill includes the language of HB 2428 (Dogan) to impose restrictions relating to certain civil rights issues. This portion allows students, parents and teachers to file complaints with DESE or the state AG regarding violations of this language.

The bill also adds requirements for posting board approved curriculum, professional development training materials, and staff salaries on DESE and district websites. The House did not adopt any amendment banning specific texts or curricula. The Association remains concerned that the bill could interfere with providing students the honest education they deserve and opposes the bill.

TRANSGENDER ATHLETIC PARTICIPATION

The Senate debated SB 781 (Moon) on April 28 but did not bring the bill to a vote. SB 781 (Moon) would prohibit transgender athletes from participating in competitive girl's or women's events in middle school, high schools, and colleges. The bill would override MSHSAA and higher education institution policies on transgender participation that generally align with NCAA and IOC policy. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in school activities and opposes the bill.

The House gave final approval to HB 2140 (McGaugh) on April 28. HB 2140 is an elections bill that includes language affecting transgender athletic participation. Rep. Bayse offered HA 2, and the amendment was adopted by a party-line vote of 89-40. The amendment is purported to allow individual school districts to vote to ban transgender athletes from participating in competitive girl's events in middle schools and high schools. Such an approach would disrupt the ability of MSHSAA to provide a statewide policy on this issue. Also, the amendment may block all transgender athlete participation, since the provision is written as a statewide law, not as suggested local ballot language. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in school activities and opposes the amendment.

The House also adopted another amendment affecting transgender athletic participation on April 25. Rep. Copeland offered HA 3 to HB 1973 (Gregory), a bill pertaining to school transportation. The amendment was adopted by a nearly party-line vote of 93-41. The amendment bans transgender athletes from participating in competitive girl's events in middle schools and high schools. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in school activities and opposes the amendment. Before HA 3 was adopted, Rep. Dogan offered HA 1 to HA 3 to prohibit school districts from discriminating against a current or prospective employee based on sexual orientation or gender

identity. HA 1 to HA 3 was defeated by a vote of 60-77. The Association opposes discrimination in the school workplace and supported HA 1 to HA 3.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION OMNIBUS BILL

The House Higher Education Committee voted on April 25 to approve an omnibus version of SB 718 (Washington). SB 718 designates the third week of September each year as the "Historically Black College and University Week" in Missouri.

The HCS add the following provisions:

HB 2171 (Francis) to require that all students will be expected to complete an individual and career academic plan that includes planning a transition to post-secondary training or employment, but the HCS does not include the more controversial provision from HB 2171 that would require all high school students to complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) as a requirement to graduate,

HB 2202 (Fitzwater) regarding coursework and instruction in computer science,

HB 2136 (Ann Kelley) regarding suicide prevention training offered to teachers,

HB 1683 (Chris Brown) to require in-state public educational institutions to grant undergraduate course credit for students who score 3 or higher on advance placement examinations,

HB 2731 (Shields) to revise the Dual Credit Scholarship program by adding related provisions relating to dual enrollment courses, and

HB 1940 (Mackey) to protect Section 529 education savings plan assets in bankruptcy proceedings.

SUICIDE PREVENTION

The House gave final approval to HCS/HB 2136 (Ann Kelley) on April 28. The bill enacts requirements relating to suicide prevention education and information. Districts shall offer two hours of professional development and teachers may participate in the training. The bill also requires student ID cards to have suicide prevention contact information. The Association supports the bill.

SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

In addition to HB 1858, the committee heard HB 1481 (Dinkins) on April 26. The bill would add other designated school personnel (other than teachers and administrators) to the list of employees a school district may designate as a school protection officer.

The committee also met on April 28 and voted to approve three bills:

HB 2365 (Shields) to make the early learning quality assurance reporting program permanent and authorizes the program to provide continuous improvement and ongoing updated consumer education. The Association supports the bill.

HB 2366 (Shields) to require districts and charter schools to identify and provide services and programs for gifted children. The bill requires 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.

SB 835 (O'Laughlin) to provide that no public school shall be a member of a statewide activities association if such association prohibits a home school student from participating in any event or activity offered by a public school in the school district in which the student resides. The Association believes that educators should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of Missouri students who participate in school activities and opposes the bill.

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