



# Legislative Update

By Otto Fajen  
MNEA Legislative Director  
[Otto.fajen@mnea.org](mailto:Otto.fajen@mnea.org)

Number 3  
Jan 20, 2022  
[www.mnea.org](http://www.mnea.org)

By Otto Fajen  
MNEA Legislative Director

## 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 19. The State of the State address gives the Governor a chance to present his vision for the state and his budget priorities. Governor Parson began listing his FY 23 funding priorities with new spending in education and workforce programs.

The State has unprecedented levels of cash on hand due to federal stimulus funds and state revenues from an economy buoyed by additional federal funding in the private sector. The Governor's budget includes many one-time funding requests to use a significant portion of those balances.

In K-12 education, the proposed budget will meet DESE's recommendation for full funding of the formula. This recommendation is actually for flat funding, as DESE projects the same cost for next school year. With the reinstatement of formula cost limiting factors in SB 686 from 2016, the formula cost continues to grow very slowly, averaging only 0.3% per year since enacted in 2005, and far below the cost of inflation over that time. The Governor also requested \$21.8M for state matching funds to school districts that increase starting teacher salary to at least \$38,000 per year.

In higher education, the Governor requested an additional \$6M for A+ Schools scholarships and \$7.1M for dual credit and dual enrollment scholarships for low income Missouri students and a \$51.6M increase in core funding for public higher education institutions. The Governor also requested nearly \$470 million to fund capital improvement projects at state community colleges and four-year institutions.

## CHARTER SCHOOLS

The Senate Education Committee heard SB 650 (Eigel) on January 18. The bill would allow charter schools to be sponsored by outside entities (other than the local school board) and operate in many districts around the state. The Association opposes the bill. Sen. Eigel also offered a proposed SCS version that would add several other provisions, including moving school board elections to the November election, adding restrictions on approval of debt service levies, preventing schools from requiring face masks and preventing school districts from requiring students or staff to have COVID vaccinations.

Missouri NEA 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. School board sponsorship ensures that the board can plan the use of all school funds and implement the services and programs that meet the needs of all students in the community. The Association also believes that all 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.

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

The House Elementary and Secondary Education Committee met on January 19 and heard three bills:

- 1) HB 2304 (Lewis) would create a state law establishing qualifications for substitute teachers that is similar to the State Board rule that currently allows either 60 hours of college credit or completion of 20 hours of DESE training to qualify for certification. The Association supports high standards for substitute teachers and believes that professional development, including classroom management, should be required for all substitutes. The Association also suggests that substitutes should be regularly surveyed to better understand the challenges they face and improve working conditions and pay for substitutes.
- 2) HB 1750 (Basye) would allow voters of a school district to file a petition to require the school board to place a requested item on the board agenda. Petitions could seek to address board policy, administrative actions, curriculum, instruction, or the school calendar. The bill also allows lawsuits to seek to require school employees and officials to perform actions required by school law. The Association is concerned that this language could subject school employees to frivolous lawsuits and opposes the bill.
- 3) HB 1669 (Seitz) is another bill about school boards and instruction concerning race and history. The bill seeks to prohibit certain "concepts" about individuals based upon race or gender from being included in courses. The Association believes that curriculum decisions are best made at the local level. The Association is also concerned that the wording of the bill may create uncertainty for teachers regarding what specific concepts are banned and in what contexts and urges the committee to reject the bill as filed.

The committee was scheduled to hear HB 2211 (Hurlbert), but the bill was not heard. HB 2211 would expand the tax credit voucher program created last year with the enactment of HCS/HB 349 (Christofanelli) to several additional counties. The Association opposed HCS/HB 349. HB 349 will create a type of voucher known as a scholarship tax credit. This program will reduce state general revenue funds by up to \$50 million per year and reduce state funds that could have been used for public education and other vital services and would divert those funds to private and home schools that are not held to the same standards as public schools.

The committee was also scheduled to vote on HB 1747 (Basye) on January 19 but did not vote on the bill. The bill would establish a process for school board member recall elections and allow lawsuits to seek to require school employees and officials to perform actions required by school law. The Association is concerned that this latter language could subject school employees to frivolous lawsuits and opposes the bill.

## **EDUCATION APPROPRIATIONS**

The House Appropriations - Education Committee met on January 20 to hear informational overviews by the Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development, Council on Public Higher Education, Missouri Community College Association, University of Missouri System and the Department of Elementary and Secondary Education. The committee also received public testimony regarding education appropriations.

## **TAX CUTS**

The Senate Ways and Means Committee met on January 20 and heard several bills, including two significant tax cut bills: 1) SB 701 (Moon) to eliminate the corporate income tax and SB 739 (Eigel) to reduce the top rate of income tax. While the state is currently flush with cash due to an influx of federal stimulus funds and high state revenues from an economy benefitting from federal funds to the private sector, these bills would enact significant and permanent tax cuts that will reduce the state's long term capacity to fund public education and other vital services. The Association opposes both bills.

The committee also voted to approve SCS/SB 649 (Eigel). The bill would gradually eliminate the tax on personal property tax by incrementally lowering the assessment percentage from the current 33 1/3% rate over a period of up to fifty years, based on offsetting increases in revenues in each county from taxes on property in other classes. The SCS version limits the bill to St. Charles County only. The Association is concerned that the bill would block incremental school revenue growth in proportion to assessed value growth and shift tax burden onto real estate owners. This shift would also create increasing disparities between personal property tax assessments across the state as various counties will see differences in the rate of assessment growth. The Association opposes the bill.

## **INITIATIVE PETITIONS**

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee met on January 19. The committee heard HJR 88 (McGill) and HJR 102 (Evans). The committee was scheduled to hear HJR 91 (Eggleston) but did not hear the measure. All three joint resolutions would make it harder for citizens to use the initiative petition process in the future, and the Association opposes these measures.

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee approved HCS/HJR 79 (Henderson) on January 19. HJR 79 would require a higher fraction of signatures (10% of voters rather than 8 % per district) in more parts of the state (all eight Congressional districts rather than six) for an initiative that amends the Constitutions. The HJR also would require a two-thirds supermajority vote (rather than the simple majority vote required since Missouri became a state) to pass a Constitutional amendment brought forward by either the legislature or by initiative. The Association opposes this measure and will continue to fight to protect the citizens' initiative petition process.

## **CONGRESSIONAL REDISTRICTING**

The House passed HCS/HB 2117 (Shaul) on January 19 by a vote of 86-67. However, the emergency clause failed by a vote of 95-55, 14 votes short of the required 2/3rds supermajority. The emergency

clause would allow the bill to go into effect by the date of the primary election. Without approval of the emergency clause, the bill becomes effective on August 28.

The bill would update Missouri's eight Congressional districts, based upon the 2020 U.S. Census data that was released last year. The legislature revises Congressional districts every ten years by enacting a bill that specifies those new districts. With candidate filing beginning in late February and ending in late March, candidates will want to know what the district boundaries are before that filing window closes.

HCS/HB 2117 is regarded as a "6-2" map, meaning that, like the current map, historical voting performance would maintain a 6-2 split in the Republican and Democratic Party makeup of Missouri's delegation to Congress. Several floor amendments were offered, but none were approved. Two amendments sought to create a "7-1" map that would attempt to make an additional minority party seat, CD 5 in the Kansas City area, less safe for a minority party candidate. Another amendment sought to make CD 2 in St. Louis County and St. Charles County more competitive.

**Legislative Update 2022**

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

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