



Legislative Update

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

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LEGISLATURE ADJOURNS FOR THE WEEK TO AVOID WINTER STORM

The House and Senate both adjourned on February 1 until Monday, February 7 and canceled the remaining committee hearings for the week in order to return home before the arrival of this week's winter storm.

ATTEND CAPITOL ACTION DAYS!

Capitol Action Days are part of the Association's plan to promote positive policy for public education. MNEA's Capitol Action Days occur regularly on Wednesdays during legislative session, beginning in February. The first Capitol Action Day is February 9th for Governance Districts 2 and 10.

MNEA Board of Directors members, working with Government Relation Teams and local presidents, have organized Capitol Action Days for their Governance Districts. Our efforts will make more of an impact if members from throughout the Governance District attend.

Plan now to make the trip to Jefferson City to attend your Capitol Action Days. Talk to other members about attending, too.

For more information and to register for your Capitol Action Day, please visit <https://www.mnea.org/CAD>

BUDGET

The House Budget Committee met on January 31 to hear a budget presentation from DESE staff regarding the Governor's budget proposal for K-12 education. In K-12 education, the proposed budget will meet DESE's recommendation for full funding of the formula. This recommendation is 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.

The committee heard HB 3014 (Smith), the supplemental budget bill, on January 10. HB 3014 would appropriate the \$1.9 billion in federal ESSER III funding to school districts along with several provisions needed to fund Medicaid expansion this year as approved by voters. The Association urges the legislature to quickly approve this appropriation measure. The \$1.9 billion in federal ESSER III grant funding was approved by Congress last year and should be appropriated as soon as possible to allow the funds to be used according to district plans to provide a safe return to school, address learning loss and help students recover from the impact of the pandemic.

HOUSE ELEMENTARY AND SECONDARY EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on February 1:

HB 1721 (Shields) to allow school districts that share superintendents to receive additional state aid.

HB 1804 (Viet) to allow school districts to change from at-large to subdistrict school board elections, including the local option for any district to vote to approve a change to elect some or all board members from subdistricts.

HB 1814 (Pollitt) to create a public school open enrollment program. The Association believes that a public school choice plan must state its purpose and intended outcomes at the outset, be designed primarily to improve the quality of instructional and educational programs in the public schools, promote equal educational opportunity for all students, and operate in ways that facilitate better racial, ethnic, and socioeconomic balances in the public schools. The Association opposes the bill as filed.

HB 2428 (Dogan) to impose restrictions on instruction relating to race and history. The bill authorizes lawsuits against school employees for violations of the new requirements in the bill. The Association is concerned that this new language could subject school employees to frivolous lawsuits and opposes the bill.

The committee postponed the scheduled hearings on two bills:

HB 1933 (Basye) requires establishment of a civil rights study curriculum. The Association believes that curriculum should be developed at the local level and opposes this state-mandated curriculum bill as filed.

HB 2359 (Basye) to modify who is required to report and what information is reported to the Missouri Accountability Portal.

In addition to hearing bills, the committee voted to approve two bills:

HB 1585 (Murphy) to require public schools to teach students the responsible use of social media.

HCS/HB 1750 (Basye) revises the original bill and requires each school board and charter school to adopt a policy on community engagement. The policy will allow interested community

members to communicate with governing boards and school administrators on an issue related to school governance or operations. The policy may require the community member to speak with administrators before seeking board action. The bill still allows lawsuits to seek to require school employees and officials to perform actions required by school law. Rep. Dogan offered an amendment to limit lawsuits to cases where the school employee or official was previously convicted of violation of a school law, but the amendment was defeated. The Association is concerned that the bill could subject school employees to frivolous lawsuits and opposes the bill.

SENATE EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The Committee was scheduled to hear several bills on February 1, but the hearing was canceled in anticipation of winter storm weather this week. The following bills were set for hearing this week and will likely be heard next week:

SB 691 (Rehder) to require school districts to conduct criminal background checks on certain adults seeking enrollment in courses taught at public schools.

SB 703 (Eslinger), a companion bill to HB 2171 (Francis), to strengthen provisions intended to make sure that all students consider their future plans and design their high school program to support those plans and prepare them for what comes after graduation. The bill ensures 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. The Association believes that educational programs should be developed that offer career exploration on the secondary level and supports the bill.

SB 869 (Koenig) to revise the law specifying payments to charter schools and shift more local school funds to charter schools. The Association opposes the bill. 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. 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.

GIFTED EDUCATION

The House Emerging Issues Committee heard HB 2366 (Shields) on February 1. The bill requires 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.

HOUSE WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE

The committee heard two bills on January 31:

HB 2171 (Francis) to strengthen provisions intended to make sure that all students consider their future plans and design their high school program to support those plans and prepare them for what comes after graduation. The bill ensures 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. The Association believes that educational programs should be developed that offer career exploration on the secondary level and supports the bill.

HB 2202 (Fitzwater) to require district high schools and charter high schools to offer computer science courses or imbedded instruction. The bill allows high schools the option to comply by informing students and parents of virtual course offerings in computer science.

The committee also voted to approve HB 2325 (Patterson). The bill would establish the "Workforce Diploma Program" that would create a new adult high school and industry credential program through DESE.

HOUSE HIGHER EDUCATION COMMITTEE

The committee voted to approve HB 1724 (Hudson) on January 31. The bill would regulate policies of public higher education institutions in recognizing student associations. The bill would prevent a public college from limiting recognition to belief-based student associations that require leaders to adhere to its beliefs, practice requirements or standards of conduct.

The Association believes that organizations are strengthened by offering memberships on a nondiscriminatory basis. The Association also believes social, institutional, and governmental actions and policies that engender discriminatory practices should be removed. For these reasons, the Association opposes the bill.

HOUSE GENERAL LAWS COMMITTEE

The committee heard several bills on January 31, including:

HB 1856 (Baker) to create a policy that would allow students to receive credit for participation in out-of-classroom learning experiences as approved by the State Board of Education, a school board, or a charter school. The Association expressed concerns that the wording of the bill is not clear regarding the process by which extended learning opportunities are approved by various entities and whether the amount of course and graduation credit will reflect the proportion of a required course that is demonstrated by the student.

HB 2369 (Hurlbert) would prohibit public school membership in any statewide activities association that prohibits home school students from participating in any event or activity offered by the school district in which the student resides. The Association believes that educators through their member schools should continue to establish the policies and procedures that govern the activities of the thousands of Missouri students who participate in high school activities. The Association opposes the bill.

INITIATIVE PETITIONS

The House Elections and Elected Officials Committee heard more joint resolutions pertaining to initiative petitions on January 31, including HJR 65 (Billington), HJR 74 (Lewis), HJR85 (Lewis), HJR 91 (Eggleston), and HJR 112 (Plocher). Each of these joint resolutions would make it harder for citizens to use the initiative petition process in the future, and the Association opposes these measures.

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